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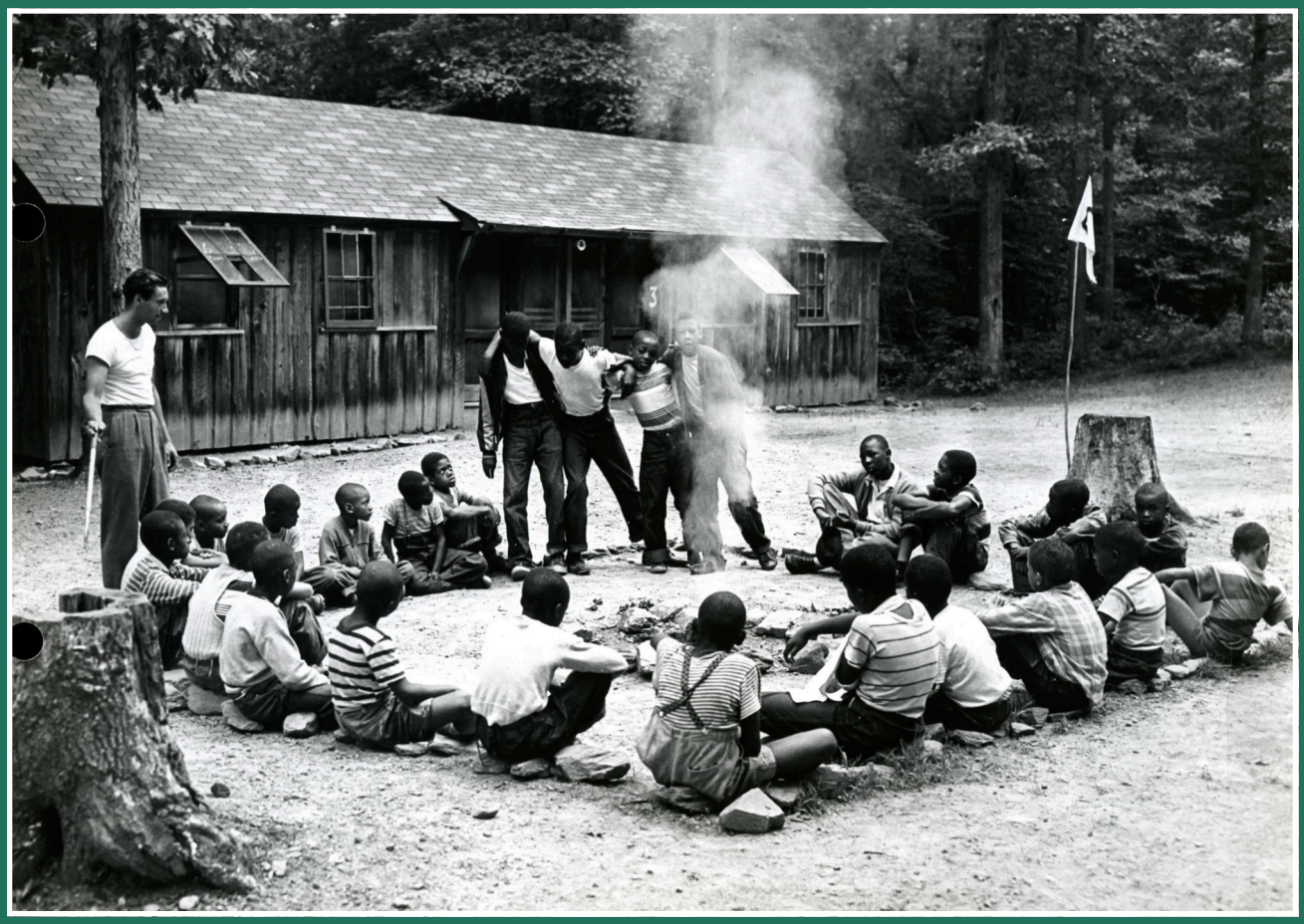
U.S. Department of the Interior

Segregation in Virginia's National Parks, 1916–1965



By Erin Krutko Devlin, PhD

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Prepared for

the National Park Service

in cooperation with

the Organization of American Historians

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U.S. Department of the Interior

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By Erin Krutko Devlin, PhD

Presented to Interior Region 1: North Atlantic-Appalachian

Prepared under a cooperative agreement between
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Cover: Campers gathered around the council circle at Camp Pleasant, 1950. (Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection, PRWI 2388.)

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Foreword

> "The ultimate aim of the National Park Service [should] be to provide for all citizens, without segregation or discrimination, use of all facilities whether furnished by the Federal Government or by concessionaires."
>
> - W.J. Trent
> Department of Interior's Adviser on Negro Affairs, 1938-1943

The National Park Service recognizes that it still has work to do to achieve W.J. Trent's "ultimate aim." While the National Park Service turned away from segregation by the 1960s, the legacy of this past policy has repercussions to the present day at many of the national parks in Virginia and beyond. Audiences that experienced segregation and discrimination in the past may still feel excluded from their rights as citizens to enjoy national parks or to work for the agency. Segregation in Virginia's National Parks, 1916-1965 challenges the National Park Service to see and consider its own role in racial segregation during the early and mid-20th century. It brings into stark relief that the agency's policy decisions and its employees' personal biases resulted in park landscapes designed to separate African Americans and other people of color from White visitors and to establish unequal access to amenities and services at Virginia's national parks.

There is an often-repeated narrative in the National Park Service about its role in segregation that the agency followed local customs at first, but then advanced a progressive agenda of integration. This apologist narrative suppresses institutional and individual accountability and allows the physical legacy of segregation in Virginia's national parks to remain unseen and unacknowledged.

In contrast, Segregation in Virginia's National Parks, 1916-1965 offers opportunities for NPS staff, partners, and the public to engage with a more candid, more meaningful history. The study challenges the NPS to confront its own practices, to acknowledge where redress is needed, and to take action to make Virginia parks truly welcoming and equitable for all visitors. It also shines a light on under-acknowledged Black leaders who fought for desegregation and equality in national parks in Virginia.

The study also provides a launch point for Virginia's national parks to engage with their communities and an opportunity for all staff to welcome and listen to the voices of people who have not been heard, help weave a more thorough telling of the many diverse stories that our parks hold, and ensure visitors and employees see themselves, and each other, in our collective past, present, and future. The national parks in Virginia will take tangible steps to build relationships with people and communities of African descent and other people of color, welcome advocates and stewards, and seek to garner trust between NPS staff and the public. Together, these actions will serve as an important catalyst for honest civic discussion.

The National Park Service is grateful for the dedication of the study's author and the many NPS employees who supported the research. It ties the past to the present, and it calls us to a better future.

Gay Vietzke
Regional Director, Interior Region 1

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Acting Regional Director, Interior Region 2

Preface

This historic resource study examines National Park Service (NPS) segregation policy and its application in parks in Virginia from 1916–1965. As the NPS began to develop national parks in the southern United States in the 1930s and 1940s, NPS officials developed and enforced a formal policy of racial segregation. During this period, the NPS developed segregated picnic areas, comfort stations, and campgrounds in areas under its direct administration, and contracted with concessionaires who operated segregated dining and lodging within the national parks. The segregation of park facilities was supported by the NPS director and other officials in the national and regional offices, endorsed by park superintendents, implemented by park planners and landscape architects, and enforced by park rangers in their interactions with visitors. As park facilities were developed in the region, NPS administrators and concessionaires routinely prioritized the construction of facilities for White visitors and delayed the construction of planned facilities for Black visitors, resulting in a separate and unequal landscape within individual parks. Moreover, across the state, the facilities available to African American travelers from park to park varied considerably and were not always clearly marked, producing an ambiguous landscape which was difficult for Black travelers to navigate. In the late 1930s, park administrators often justified these policies by maintaining that the NPS's approach to park development in the southern states accommodated local law and custom, and was a measured response to the low demand for accommodations in the parks from Black visitors. In doing so, national officials refused to publicly recognize how the lack of adequate visitor facilities or the practice of segregation itself may have suppressed African American visitation.

Although this study examines the development of NPS segregation policy and its implementation in Virginia, it is not a comprehensive study of African American recreation in Virginia's national parks. Nevertheless, within the Department of Interior in the late 1930s and early 1940s, the voices of African American visitors who challenged and questioned NPS segregation policy in individual letters of complaint, as well as through national and regional civil rights organizations, played a crucial role in opening an internal legal review and re-examination of conditions in the parks. Their accounts chronicled their interactions with NPS employees who sought to steer them toward specific parts of the national parks, as well as the discrimination and threats of arrest and violence they experienced traveling within and immediately outside park boundaries. The stories preserved in this correspondence provided a crucial counterpoint to the claims of some park administrators that African American visitors in the southern states preferred segregated facilities or that low demand from Black travelers was a justification for the development of separate and unequal facilities. As advocates inside and outside the Department of Interior worked to unravel the NPS's segregation policy,

recurrent letters of complaint from African American travelers undercut the posture of those who sought to maintain the status quo by marshalling these kinds of arguments. Moreover, after the NPS adopted a nondiscrimination policy in 1945, Black motorists and park visitors continued to place pressure on the Department of Interior to ensure that this change was effectively enforced. In doing so, they called for full and unrestricted access to all parts of the parks.

Although focused on a single state, this historic resource study is a multi-site, multi-region study. It presents information about segregation in the national parks and its implementation in Virginia through a series of narrative chapters and place-based case studies. Chapters one through five provide broad context, weaving together the conversations of NPS officials in Washington, DC, regional planning offices, local parks, and park visitors. Chapter one discusses the involvement of Virginia conservation officials in the development of national parks in the state of Virginia and the ways they sought to shape NPS policy. Chapter two examines the development of national parks through the use of segregated Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) labor. Chapter three addresses the landscape of segregation developed in Virginia's national parks, comparing NPS policy to the practices of the Virginia state park system, and illuminating the guidelines which shaped the selective development and placement of facilities for African American and White visitors in national parks and recreational demonstration areas (RDAs). Chapter four focuses on challenges to NPS segregation policy, inside and outside of the Department of Interior, and the movement toward the gradual integration of NPS visitor facilities and those operated by park concessionaires. Chapter five highlights persistent patterns of visitation within the parks after the adoption of the 1945 nondiscrimination policy and internal investigations which sought to determine whether it was adequately enforced. Throughout this larger contextual study, NPS policies are explicitly connected to specific practices within individual parks. However, readers who would like more information about how segregation impacted specific park landscapes can also refer to the series of case studies. These case studies—developed for Blue Ridge Parkway, Colonial National Historical Park, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Prince William Forest Park, and Shenandoah National Park—draw on the context established in chapters one through five but provide more detailed analysis of park-specific practices and conclude with a discussion of extant resources within the parks which are connected to the historical practice of segregation.

This historic resource study is informed by archival records related to the Department of Interior, NPS, and CCC held at the National Archives in College Park, MD, as well as resource management records, archival and museum collections, and fieldwork conducted at the six selected case study parks. The study also draws from archival material related to the Virginia Department of Conservation and Development housed at the Library of Virginia and the records of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) located at the Library of Congress. It is enriched by newspaper accounts in regional Black and White newspapers and newsletters. NPS officials often sought to minimize references to segregation in promotional literature and even on internal planning documents. Consequent-

ly, illuminating this history requires close attention to the administrative correspondence surrounding the development of park facilities and the documented experiences of park visitors.

Throughout the text, when referencing past practices, historical place names have been retained for parks as well as the places named within them. For example, Colonial National Historical Park was initially known as Colonial National Monument and Prince William Forest Park was developed as Chopawamsic Recreational Demonstration Area. What is today referred to as the Memorial House Museum at George Washington Birthplace was once known as the Memorial Mansion. As will be discussed in the pages that follow, park planners often sought to reduce or eliminate visible racial designations like "for White" or "for Negro" from park planning documents, blueprints, and directional signs. Instead, they often alluded to areas developed specifically for White and Black visitors through the use of specific place names. Consequently, it is important to retain historic place names to make the landscape encountered by park visitors in the 1930s and 1940s more intelligible.

When quoting individuals throughout the text, I have also retained their historic capitalization. The use of the word "colored," or "negro" with a lower-case *n* often served as a signal of the writer's racial politics, since civil rights advocates like W. E. B. DuBois had called for the capitalization of the word "Negro" as early as the 1920s. Accepted practice related to the capitalization of descriptors like White and Black has also been in flux in recent years. In 2020, the *Chicago Manual of Style*, as well as the Associated Press and the *New York Times,* announced a shift toward the consistent capitalization of the word Black. At the time of writing, the NPS style guide mirrors this broader shift, instructing writers to "capitalize when related to culture or identity." There is less consensus about the capitalization of the word White, but the NPS style guide encourages writers to "consider capitalizing when related to culture or identity." For consistency, I have capitalized the word White throughout the text. In doing so, I seek to call attention to the way that park planners self-consciously inscribed racial segregation onto the landscape, recognizing that when they identified park spaces as for "White only" they were referring to a historically specific—and at the time in Virginia, a legally defined—racial identity.

I am deeply indebted to the archivists, research librarians, and collections and cultural resource managers at the National Archives, Library of Congress, Library of Virginia, Blue Ridge Parkway, Colonial National Historical Park, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Prince William Forest Park, Shenandoah National Park, and University of Mary Washington for helping me identify the archival sources that sit at the center of this study. It has benefitted from the innumerable contributions of NPS staff who have provided me with access to their collections, guided me around the parks to review extant structures and resources, and carefully reviewed early drafts. The final project has also been strengthened by the insights provided through peer review. Finally, I would like to thank the late Aidan Smith and Paul Zwirecki at the Organization of American Historians for shepherding this study forward every step of the way.

CHAPTER ONE

Cooperative Park Development

This study addresses National Park Service (NPS) policies and practices related to racial segregation in the state of Virginia in the years before 1965. Local interest in developing parks began to coalesce in Virginia in the 1920s. Under the leadership of Governor Harry Byrd (1926–30), the state developed the bureaucratic infrastructure to create parks and recreational areas.[1] Virginia conservation officials worked cooperatively with the NPS to develop parks and recreational areas throughout the state. In their public addresses and promotional materials, state officials called attention to their efforts to place parks within easy driving distance for every resident. NPS officials also celebrated the development of national parks east of the Mississippi because of their accessibility for large numbers of Americans who lived in urban areas along the Atlantic seaboard. Nevertheless, state and federal parks developed in Virginia were not accessible for all residents. The state and federal parks established in Virginia before World War II were racially segregated, providing unequal access, accommodation, and opportunities for rest and recreation to African American travelers.

This park policy was connected to the broader culture of Jim Crow in the state. Virginia's formal statute requiring segregation in places of public assembly was passed in 1926, the same year that the Virginia State Commission on Conservation and Development was formally established to facilitate the development and creation of Shenandoah National Park. The Massenberg Public Assemblage Act was a response to new forms of urban mobility and social interaction that some White Virginians viewed as a threat to their control over public space.[2] It built on previous statutes that required racial segregation on forms of public transportation like trains (1900), streetcars (1906), and buses (1930), and applied a similar principle to places of public entertainment and assemblage like theaters, public halls, and as state conservation officials later argued, parks.[3] The Public Assemblage Act was designed to

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1 "Act to Create a State Commission on Conservation and Development, Approved 17 March 1926," *Laws of Virginia Related to State Commission on Conservation and Development* (Richmond: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1935), Box 20, RG 18 Department of Conservation and Development, Division of History Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

2 Grace Elizabeth Hale, "'For Colored' and 'For White' Segregating Consumption in the South," in *Jumpin' Jim Crow: Southern Politics from Civil War to Civil Rights,* eds. Jane Dailey, Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, and Bryant Simon, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 165.

3 Charles E. Wynes, "The Evolution of Jim Crow Laws in Twentieth Century Virginia," *Phylon,* 28, no. 4 (1967): 418–421.

complement the state's 1924 Racial Integrity Act, which formally defined a White person as someone with "no trace" of nonwhite ancestry. The Racial Integrity Act prohibited interracial marriage between White and Black Virginians in the name of preserving racial purity, while the Public Assemblage Act was intended to reduce the interracial mixing that might lead to sexual relationships.

Both of these statutes were reflections of the rise of the eugenics movement in Virginia and the nation at-large. Concerns about interracial sex, declining White birth rates, and rising rates of immigration provoked widespread public debate about the threat of White "racial suicide."[4] Richmond eugenicist John Powell founded the Anglo-Saxon Club of America and called publicly for the development of "fundamental and final solutions of our racial problems in general, most especially of the Negro problem."[5] State political leaders responded with legislation refining standards of racial purity, curbing interactions between Black and White residents in public space, and prohibiting interracial marriage. They also worked toward labeling those who transgressed these social and sexual boundaries as "feebleminded," making them subject to institutionalization and even forced sterilization in the name of preserving the public good. "Amalgamation would mean the destruction of the Anglo-Saxon race in America," wrote Newport News *Daily Press* editor Walter Copeland. "Rather than that should be we would prefer that every white child in the United States were sterilized and the Anglo-Saxon race left to perish in its purity."[6]

White cultural anxieties that proliferated during this period about the threat of "race suicide," also informed the conservation movement in Virginia. As William O'Brien has noted in his recent study of state park segregation, the increasingly urban character of American life provoked public debate and discussion about the decline of White American masculinity and self-sufficiency. Outdoor recreation was widely viewed as a vehicle for rejuvenating these characteristics.[7] Virginia State Commission on Conservation and Development (VCCD) Chair Wilbur Hall suggested in his public addresses that the "machine age" had led to "degeneracy" and an unhealthy tendency to reject well-established traditions. As the state's residents began to work in offices and factories, Hall contended, "muscles dwindled, digestions became weak, nerves grew tense. We began to be soft. Even the habits of our leisure hours were soft, requiring no effort, no thought, no competition." According to the chair, this physical decline led to a corresponding mental decline and contributed to increased anxiety. As Americans discarded

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4 Linda Lindquist Dorr, "Arm in Arm: Eugenics, and Virginia's Racial Integrity Acts of the 1920s," *Journal of Women's History*, 11, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 145–150.

5 Richard B. Sherman, "'The Last Stand': The Fight for Racial Integrity in Virginia in the 1920s," *The Journal of Southern History*, 54, no. 1 (February 1988): 70–75.

6 Richard B. Sherman, "The 'Teachings at Hampton Institute': Social Equality, Racial Integrity, and the Virginia Public Assemblage Act of 1926," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography,* 95 (July 1987): 275.

7 William E. O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion: State Parks and Jim Crow in the American South* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016), 29–32. See also Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880–1940* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2001), 64–65.

"the old and beaten paths for the alluring but deceptive promises of the new," an uncertain future loomed on the horizon. "What is the remedy for this state of affairs?" Hall asked. The solution was simple: "Return to the outdoors." Outdoor recreation would rejuvenate public mental, physical, and spiritual health. "The parks," Hall contended, "will help to restore the unnerved and fearful American people of today to the serenity of their ancestors."[8]

These imagined social benefits were coupled with more pragmatic concerns. Governor Harry Byrd was deeply interested in promoting the state's historic and scenic resources to attract tourism and economic development. This intended objective was reflected in the name of the Virginia State Commission on Conservation and Development. Rather than viewing conservation and development as diametrically opposed, Virginia's political leaders viewed them as deeply entwined. The Virginia State Commission on Conservation and Development often discussed the potential of parks in terms of dollars and cents, and highlighted the tourist revenue they could generate for the state.[9] Beyond this direct return on investment, they also viewed tourism as a means of bringing people to Virginia to familiarize them with the state's economic potential in other areas, particularly for industry.[10] Self-proclaimed "park nuts" used these arguments to position conservation projects as a potential driver of economic development. State conservation officials urged business leaders to capitalize on the "Virginia atmosphere," rebranding the state as a "Scenic Historyland" which would lure tourists and potential investors through a unique "blend of history, fine social traditions, climactic and scenic attractions."[11] Like their counterparts in other parts of the United States, Virginia's tourism leaders crafted a selective cultural landscape. By assigning significance to certain scenes and sites associated with Virginia's White colonial elite, or the military conflicts associated with the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, they hoped to elevate their importance for a national audience. As the historian Marguerite S. Shaffer has noted, the larger "See America First" campaign framed pilgrimage to these sites as a patriotic civic ritual. At the same time, this process implicitly dismissed or diminished the cultural salience and historic associations of sites that were not similarly marked or promoted.[12]

Nevertheless, despite this boosterism and growing interest in cultivating tourism, the state of Virginia remained fiscally conservative and was generally reluctant to appropriate the funds to acquire, develop, or maintain park land. The state was constitutionally prohibited

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8 Wilbur C. Hall, in honor of Junius Blair Fishburne, n.d., Box 20, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

9 Wilbur Hall, "Building Virginia," Address Delivered to the VA State Chamber of Commerce, 7 February 1935, Box 20, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

10 Virginia State Conservation and Development Commission (VCCD), "A Publicity Program for the Development of the State of Virginia," 1927, Box 14, Byrd Executive Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

11 Address of Hon. Wilbur C. Hall to Chamber of Commerce of Virginia, Richmond, 20 June 1935, Box 20, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

12 Shaffer, *See America First*, 5, 101.

from issuing bonds and operated on a pay-as-you-go basis. As one resident noted, when he suggested that the Byrd administration consider issuing bonds to develop parks, "I was told that it would require illumination direct from heaven to persuade the legislature of Virginia to authorize an issue of bonds for any purpose on Earth."[13] Thus, many state leaders were attracted to the idea of working cooperatively with the NPS to establish national parks in the state. In their view, establishing national parks would allow the state to benefit from increased tourism without having to shoulder the costs of development and maintenance. Although this plan required securing the land, the state preferred to supplement modest appropriations with subscription campaigns in which individual citizens pledged their support through cash donations. [14]

Some residents thought this approach was short-sighted, and urged state officials to develop local scenic and historic attractions as *state* rather than national parks. From this perspective, ceding territory to the federal government was problematic for several reasons. Economically, it deprived the state of a potential profitable "capital investment" which might generate returns through taxes, harvested timber, or revenue from concessions.[15] But more pointedly, the effort to create national parks in the state raised concerns about federal encroachment in the Old Dominion. G. M. Dillard argued that the transfer of land to the NPS led to the "further aggrandizement" of the federal government within the state. He warned, "When the vigor and control of the States is lost over a subject [like parks] within their sphere and boundaries, there will be no barrier between the citizen and tyranny, till the National Government collapses."[16] Others, like Alfred Ackerman, objected to reducing Virginia's authority to a state of quasi-sovereignty by granting federal jurisdiction in vast swaths of land "subject to no control by Virginia except as her voice may be heard in Congress."[17] This sentiment was particularly powerful in Richmond, where the specter of formally ceding control of the battlefields surrounding the capital of the Confederacy echoed uncomfortably for proponents of the Lost Cause.[18]

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13 G. M. Dillard to William Carson, VCCD Chair, 26 January 1927, Virginia Conservation Commission Minutes and Program Meeting Books, 1926-1933, vol. 2, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

14 "The Status of the Shenandoah National Park Movement," 20 May 1927, Box 16, Byrd Executive Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

15 G. M. Dillard to Governor Harry Byrd, 22 May 1928, Box 16, Byrd Executive Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

16 G. M. Dillard to William Carson, VCCD Chair, 29 October 1927, Box 16, Byrd Executive Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

17 "No Danger in National Park," *Richmond News Leader,* 18 January 1930.

18 H. J. Eckenrode, State Historian, to William Carson, VCCD Chair, 17 July 1931, Box 56, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA. For more on Lost Cause mythology, see David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 255–259. Blight places emphasis on efforts to advance a selective history of the Civil War to reshape the nation's understanding of the causes and consequences of the conflict, and to recast a narrative of defeat into a symbolic victory for the rhetoric of white supremacy. "Historical memory," he writes, "was a weapon with which to engage in a struggle over political policy and a means to sustain the social and racial order" of the Jim Crow South, 282.

Despite these objections, a number of national parks were established in the state in quick succession, starting with Shenandoah National Park in 1926. Shenandoah was promoted as one of the nation's most accessible parks because of its proximity to populous metropolitan centers on the East Coast. Shenandoah's Skyline Drive attracted motorists who were able to continue on their journey south along the Blue Ridge Parkway in the southwestern corner of the state on their way to Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina. Virginia state boosters also persuaded the NPS to establish Colonial National Monument in the tidewater, and to connect Jamestown, Williamsburg, and Yorktown with a scenic parkway. George Washington Birthplace National Monument was also created as part of this larger effort to interpret Virginia's colonial history. These historic sites complemented the battlefield parks transferred from the War Department to the NPS at Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania, and Petersburg. By the early 1940s, additional battlefields in Richmond, Manassas, and Appomattox were also established as national military parks and were conceived as part of a comprehensive system of battlefields in the state that could tell the history of the Civil War from Manassas to Appomattox.

These early national parks established in the years before World War II were directly shaped by the NPS's policy of racial segregation. As a US senator (1933–1965), former Governor Harry Byrd later maintained that his administration reached an agreement with officials from the NPS to abide by Virginia practice and law.[19] Aside from Byrd's assertion that this was the case, there is no documentary record that directly supports this claim. However, it is certain that NPS officials in Washington, as well as park planners, landscape architects, superintendents, and park rangers throughout the state enforced a formal policy of racial segregation throughout the 1930s and 1940s. The NPS developed segregated picnic areas, comfort stations, and campgrounds in areas under its direct administration, and contracted with concessionaires who operated segregated dining and lodging.

In the years before the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, court precedent held that segregation was constitutional as long as facilities provided for White and Black people were equal. However, as will be discussed in greater depth in chapter three, the facilities provided for African American travelers in Virginia's national parks were not equal. Indeed, in some parks, the NPS pointedly refused to develop *any* facilities for African American use in the hope of discouraging Black travelers from visiting. However, recurrent complaints from civil rights organizations, concerned citizens, and advocates within the Department of Interior, as well as the costs associated with attempting to construct duplicative facilities, led to the gradual abolition of this practice in the 1940s. Later additions to the system of national parks in Virginia which were developed in the postwar period—like Assateague Island National Seashore, Booker T. Washington National Memorial, Harpers Ferry, and Cumberland Gap—

19 Harry Byrd to First Assistant Secretary E.K. Burlew, 9 March 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

were part of the broader racialized landscape in the state, but generally speaking, whatever racial separation was practiced within their borders was not a matter of formal policy.

Many of the inter-war national parks established in Virginia were developed with CCC labor. As will be discussed further in chapter two, CCC camps were also segregated by race and most African American camps in the state were placed in parks along the Atlantic seaboard in communities with higher percentages of Black residents. In addition to the national parks, CCC camps working under the supervision of the NPS also helped develop the first six state parks in Virginia. The Virginia State Commission on Conservation and Development explored the possibility of sites for state parks in the late 1920s, but without appropriations to acquire and develop them, little progress had been made.[20] The influx of Emergency Conservation Work money changed the financial calculus, and the state quickly put its plans into action.[21] In 1935, VCCD Chair Wilbur Hall boasted that the federal government had expended over $5,000,000 dollars in the development of the state park system, whereas the state of Virginia had only appropriated $20,000 to administer them. The state benefitted from the value added through the construction of park facilities, roads, and other capital improvements.[22]

Hall noted that the investment of federal funds and CCC labor had enabled the state to provide "all citizens … equal opportunity for recreation," with a park within a 50-mile radius of every resident.[23] Of course, this was only true for White Virginians. Virginia's first six parks were established for the use of White visitors only, with a single separate recreational area in Prince Edward County established for African American day use. Virginia state conservation officials clearly developed recreational areas for the benefit of White residents, travelers, and prospective investors. Although they urged business owners at gas stations, hotels, and restaurants, to greet travelers with "the hospitality and friendliness that is a tradition of Virginia," they were not concerned that many of these establishments refused to serve Black guests.[24] When the conservation commission was approached by an African American real estate agent who expressed the desire to encourage African American migration to the state after reviewing their promotional material, the Commission discouraged his interest and agreed to work "against any promiscuous general introduction of colored land owners" to the state.[25] State officials also expressed indifference or hostility to appeals from African American

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20 Program of VCCD, 15 February 1929, Box 15, Byrd Executive Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

21 Minutes of VCCD, 3 June 1933, VA Conservation Commission Minutes and Program Meeting Books, 1926–1933, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

22 Wilbur Hall, "Building Virginia."

23 Wilbur Hall, "Building Virginia."

24 Address of Hon. Wilbur C. Hall to Chamber of Commerce of Virginia.

25 Minutes of Meeting of Conservation and Development Commission, 15 February 1929, Virginia Conservation Commission Minutes and Program Meeting Books, 1926–1933, vol. 5, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

residents who wanted sites that were historically significant for their communities to be formally marked like their White counterparts. For example, state historian H. J. Eckenrode rejected repeated requests to erect a state marker at the Holley Graded School, a site of Black education established shortly after emancipation. Eckenrode suggested that recognizing the site with a marker would place undesirable pressure on the state to mark similar sites (see Figure 1).[26]

In their work with the state, NPS staff could withdraw CCC camps from parks that failed to meet their exacting planning standards, but the development of segregated state facilities was not challenged and was entirely consistent with operating procedures within the national parks themselves. Indeed, during this same period, the NPS also planned, developed, and administered RDAs designed to serve the populations of Washington, DC, and Richmond, as well as six wayside parks throughout Virginia. RDAs were generally developed with the intention of turning them over to another agency for their perpetuation and maintenance. In Virginia, the organized camping facilities and picnic areas developed in these areas were

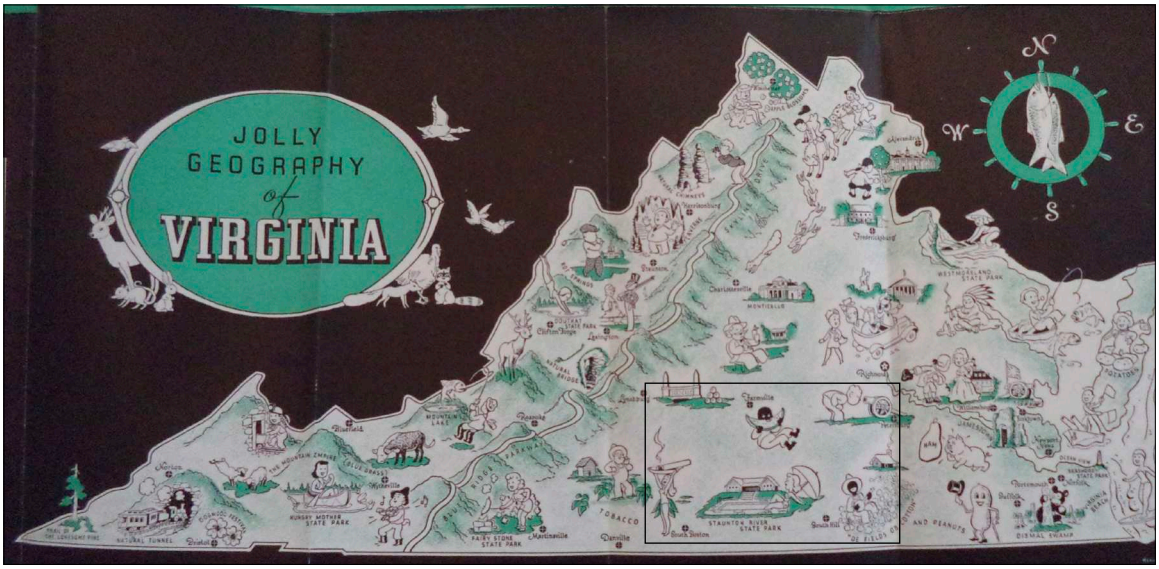

Figure 1. This map, produced for the Virginia Conservation Commission by the Department of Publicity and Advertising, demonstrates how the "Jolly Geography of Virginia" was racially coded by the state through its use of racist caricature. The White female figure sunbathing at Staunton River State Park (see inset) marked this space as White. (Box 39, RG 18 Department of Conservation and Development, Division of History Papers Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA. Courtesy of the Library of Virginia.)

26 H. J. Eckenrode to Dr. Douglas S. Freeman, 27 July 1937, Box 20, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA. Holley Graded School was listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register in 1989 and the National Register of Historic Places in 1990 (https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/066-0112/).

also segregated, and were maintained for nearly a decade by the NPS before they were transferred to the state. Swift Creek RDA became Pocahontas State Park and the waysides were transferred to the State Highway Department, but the NPS retained Chopawamsic RDA as Prince William Forest Park.

Cooperative Interpersonal Relationships

The spirit of cooperation and the policy of segregation that marked state and federal park development in Virginia was the product of institutional as well as interpersonal relationships. As governor, and later as US senator, Harry Byrd kept a close eye on the Virginia State Commission on Conservation and Development. Its first chair, William E. Carson, was Byrd's manager during his gubernatorial campaign and the commission was staffed with staunch "Byrd men" who operated as part of his influential political machine.[27] As the undisputed leader of the Democratic Party in Virginia, Byrd was a proponent of limited government, balanced budgets, bureaucratic efficiency, and unregulated markets. He was an ardent defender of states' rights and a committed segregationist, arguing that racial separation was "essential to the maintenance of peaceful and friendly relationships between the races."[28] In addition to continuing to control the levers of power at the local and state level, Byrd as well as senior Senator Carter Glass also wielded substantial influence in Washington. As conservative southern Democrats, their votes were courted by the Roosevelt administration in support of New Deal legislation, but were not assured. Generally critical of the president's social safety net and appropriations for public works as a matter of principle, Byrd and Glass nevertheless sought to secure federal largesse for Virginia and to redirect and channel it in ways that reinforced their own political power and preserved the practice of racial segregation and White privilege in the state.[29]

Ambivalence about the balance of state and federal power, and adherence to principle versus pragmatism, also marked the Virginia State Commission on Conservation and Development's interactions with the NPS during this same period. While Virginia conservation officials expressed some reservations about federal control, particularly over Civil War battlefields, they nevertheless sought to benefit from the contributions the NPS might make to the development of parks throughout the state. Virginia conservation officials sought to preserve as much of their own authority and influence over park development as they could even in

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27 "Carson's Public Service Unique in State's Annals," 27 November 1940; "William E. Carson, Conservation Commission Chairman for Eight Years, Succumbs at Home," *Richmond Times-Dispatch,* 26 March 1942, Box 57, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

28 Ronald L. Heinemann, *Harry Byrd of Virginia* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 87–89, 329.

29 Ronald L. Heinemann, *Depression and New Deal in Virginia: The Enduring Dominion* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983), 89.

areas ostensibly controlled by the NPS. In this regard, they were able to leverage the influence of the Virginia Congressional delegation, but they also sought to forge ties of friendship and common interest when and where they could. In the late 1920s and 1930s, they found both Secretaries of Interior Hubert Work and Harold Ickes politely distant, but they believed they developed cooperative and productive relationships with NPS Directors Horace Albright and Arno B. Cammerer.[30]

For example, in 1927, the establishment of Shenandoah National Park was threatened by the inability of the state of Virginia to secure enough money to acquire the minimum number of acres required in the enabling legislation. State officials also feared a revolt in the Byrd organization at the county level if too much productive, taxable farmland was incorporated into the park's boundary. Byrd hoped to reduce the size of the park to control costs and avoid political opposition.[31] A sure signal of his intent was the appearance of a box of apples from his orchard at Secretary of Interior Work's office. This approach was a hallmark of the way the Byrd political machine did business in Richmond as well as in Washington, DC. NPS Director Steven Mather noted this development during a lunch with William Joseph Showalter, a staff writer with *National Geographic Magazine* who had collaborated with Virginia conservation officials to create a promotional pamphlet titled *Virginia: The Beckoning Land*. Showalter reported that Mather had joked "that since the Secretary of Interior has been munching Virginia gubernatorial apples his attitude toward the Park has softened very much—that Virginia apples may be depended upon to soften the heart and improve the disposition of the hardest worked Government official."[32] During his campaign to reduce the size of Shenandoah, Byrd applied his brand of "apple diplomacy" and was particularly assiduous in his efforts to court Assistant NPS Director Arno B. Cammerer.

Virginia conservation officials sought a personal conference with Cammerer in the summer of 1927, shortly after receiving a letter from him indicating that the NPS was interested in determining the definitive boundary line for Shenandoah National Park.[33] State officials maintained that unless they were able to reduce the minimum acreage required for the national park, they would have to abandon the project or settle for a smaller state park.[34] VCCD Chair William Carson reported that Cammerer advised the Virginia delegation to ask for a

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30 For Carson's observations about Secretary Work, see Carson to Byrd, 23 July 1928, Box 17, Byrd Executive Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

31 H. G. Shirley, Chair, Virginia State Highway Commission to Byrd, 21 July 1926; Carson to Byrd, 9 September 1927, Box 16, Byrd Executive Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

32 William J. Showalter to Carson, 31 December 1926, Box 17, Byrd Executive Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA. See also Carson to Cammerer, 7 January 1928, Box 11, Entry 60, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

33 Arno B. Cammerer to E. O. Fippin, Executive Secretary and Treasurer, VCCD, marked personal and confidential, 22 July 1927, Box 16, Byrd Executive Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

34 Minutes of VCCD, 16 September 1927, vol. 1, VA Conservation Commission Minutes and Program Meeting Books, 1926–1933, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

formal review of the land proposed for the park.[35] When Secretary Work assigned Cammerer himself to complete this survey, Carson was jubilant. "Cammerer knows conditions of park," he reported in a telegram. "I hope to have him recommend curtailment of the area."[36] Within a month, the chair reported to Byrd, "It looks as if we have hit the bull's eye in Park matters, as we are getting exactly the reaction we want with Cammerer. . . . We will get the Park and get it without such enormous expenditures of money, effort and bad feeling through taking away pastures, orchards, and homes." Carson could not predict how Secretary Work would react to the recommendation to shrink the size of the park, "but I am not much afraid of that when his own men bring in a report such as they are planning."[37] Although the boundary Cammerer ultimately proposed was not as small as the state's goal of 250,000 acres, at 327,000 acres it was substantially smaller than the 385,500 initially required and it excluded land under productive cultivation in the Blue Ridge foothills.[38] As Cammerer fine-tuned his work, Byrd himself entertained the assistant director at Skyland and later invited him and his wife to be his guests at the executive mansion for a social visit. Cammerer was assured of Byrd's gratitude when he was in receipt of a box of apples.[39]

Cammerer continued to work closely and cooperatively with Virginia conservation officials after writing Byrd and expressing his desire to work privately as a resident of the state of Virginia to help raise funds for the park.[40] Even with the reduced acreage, a one million dollar appropriation from the state legislature, and more funds collected from private pledges, the state was still substantially short of the amount of money needed to acquire land. Byrd proposed to "constitute a small committee" composed of himself, William Carson, and Cammerer to fundraise outside of the state. Cammerer insisted that his appointment be cleared with Secretary Work, who gave his approval provided that Cammerer's contributions to the committee did not encroach on his commitments to the NPS.[41] Cammerer deployed NPS stenographers to write letters of appeal to wealthy and "public-spirited" Americans across the

35 VCCD Program, 18 August 1927, vol. 2, VA Conservation Commission Minutes and Program Meeting Books, 1926–1933, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

36 Telegram from Carson to Byrd, 4 October 1927, Box 16, Byrd Executive Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

37 Carson to Byrd, 22 October 1927, Box 17; Work to Byrd, 22 December 1927, Box 16, Byrd Executive Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

38 Cammerer to Wilbur, 15 October 1929, Box 11, Entry 60, RG 79, NARA; Minutes of VCCD, 22 November 1927, vol. 1; Report of Secretary Conservation and Development Commission, 22 November 1927, vol. 2, VA Conservation Commission Minutes and Program Meeting Books, 1926–1933, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

39 Byrd to Cammerer, 9 November 1927; Cammerer to Byrd, 12 December 1927; Byrd to Cammerer, 14 December 1927; Byrd to Cammerer, 19 December 1927, Box 16, Byrd Executive Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA. Cammerer to Byrd, 5 January 1928, Box 11, Entry 60, RG 79.

40 Cammerer to Byrd, 6 July 1928, Box 16, Byrd Executive Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

41 Byrd to Work, 11 April 1928; Work to Byrd, 1928, Box 16, Byrd Executive Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA. Byrd to Cammerer, 8 June 1928, Box 11, Entry 60, RG 79, NARA.

nation.[42] Although Byrd privately confessed to Carson that he did not think Cammerer would be able to raise substantial funds, he evidently saw some benefit in cultivating a close and cordial relationship with the NPS administrator.[43] The relationship proved to be beneficial for both men. When Secretary of Interior Ickes was considering a replacement for NPS Director Horace Albright, Cammerer's connections with political figures like Byrd was a mark in his favor. "Mr. Cammerer has many friends," a review of the prospective candidates noted, "including many congressman and senators."[44]

By the time Shenandoah National Park was dedicated in 1936, Cammerer was serving as director of the NPS. In that capacity, he would write letters in defense of the policy of segregation established in the park in response to complaints from private citizens and inquiries from Secretary of Interior Ickes. Although there is no record of the private conversation that led to an agreement to abide by the practice of segregation in Shenandoah or the other national parks in the state that followed, the topic may have been broached just like the proposal to reduce the size and scope of the park—at a personal conference at NPS offices in DC, during a social visit at the executive mansion in Richmond, or while enjoying the governor's hospitality while listening to "Uncle Mallory," whom Cammerer later described as the "old darky preacher who rendered spirituals in his basso profundo" during the evening he spent with Byrd at Skyland as the park's boundary survey was being finalized.[45]

Despite cultivating a relationship with Cammerer, Virginia conservation officials were not sure how the new director would respond to their many other park proposals. Horace Albright had been enthusiastic about the idea of establishing Colonial National Monument and incorporating historic areas into the NPS, but they were not sure if Cammerer would adopt the same approach.[46] Virginia conservation officials were early proponents of having established battlefield parks administered under the purview of the NPS rather than the War Department. Even so, they were reluctant to turn over additional battlefields to the federal government until their own influence over historical interpretation and park planning in these spaces was assured. As noted above, this was particularly the case in relation to the battlefields surrounding Richmond.

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42 Secretary to Mr. Cammerer to Carson, 7 July 1928, Box 11, Entry 60, RG 79, NARA; Cammerer to Byrd, 5 October 1928, Box 17, Byrd Executive Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA. Example of fundraising letter, Cammerer to Armour, 23 January 1929, Box 11, Entry 60, RG 79, NARA.

43 Byrd to Carson, 17 July 1928, Box 17, Byrd Executive Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

44 Memorandum for Secretary Ickes, n.d., Box 6, Entry 766, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

45 Cammerer to Byrd, 12 December 1927, Box 16, Byrd Executive Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

46 For an example of Albright's enthusiasm for Colonial National Monument see Albright to Kenneth Chorley, 27 March 1929, Box 2, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA. On the state's perception of Albright and Cammerer see Eckenrode to Carson, 15 September 1933, Box 56, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

Virginia Battlefield Development and Cooperative Interpretation

Virginia's State Historian H. J. Eckenrode was sharply critical of the War Department's work at the Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania, and Petersburg battlefields. He complained of unnecessary delays, insufficient funding, overdevelopment through the construction of roads, and a lack of appropriate "regard" for the "opinions and wishes" of Virginians.[47] Eckenrode's opinion was informed by his association with the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV). Within a year of being named the Director of Historical and Archeological Investigation by the state, Eckenrode was elected historian in chief of the SCV in 1928 and continued to serve in that capacity the following year (see Figure 2). In his correspondence with other Sons, Eckenrode despaired that the history and causes of the "War Between the States" were being defined by northerners and he was determined to advance an interpretation that was more sympathetic to the "cause for which our fathers fought."[48]

In 1927, the Richmond Battlefield Parks Corporation purchased land at Fort Harrison for the purpose of establishing a park there. The Virginia State Commission on Conservation and Development had refused to outlay the funds to secure the land itself, citing a lack of resources.[49] Nevertheless, Eckenrode was deeply interested in how the battlefield area would be interpreted. When he learned that the Richmond Battlefield Parks Corporation planned to turn the areas under their control over to the War Department, he objected vociferously. He informed the president of the organization, T. M. Carrington, that he had been informed that if the War Department gained control over the battlefield they "would have entire charge of the wording and placing of the markers on the battlefield" and that they did not want the "outside advice" of state officials. This was particularly disturbing, Eckenrode warned, because in his opinion the War Department was deeply invested in the "traditions of the Union Army" and would not fairly represent the position of the Confederacy. As Eckenrode put it, Colonel Landers of the US Army War College viewed the development of the Richmond Battlefield Parks "as his own special province, and did not particularly desire our co-operation."[50] VCCD Chair William Carson seconded Eckenrode's opposition to the idea. "I do not believe the War Department, with its preconceived ideas and traditions," he wrote, "is the right organization to develop the Civil War Battlefields."[51]

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47 Eckenrode to Carson, 10 August 1928, Box 55; Eckenrode to Carrington, 27 September 1930, Box 10, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

48 Certificate, Historian in Chief, Sons of Confederate Veterans, 1 November 1928; Eckenrode to Gen. John Ashby Jones, Commander in Chief of Sons of Confederate Veterans, 2 October 1929, Box 47, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

49 VCCD Program, 18 August 1927, vol. 2, VA Conservation Commission Minutes and Program Meeting Books, 1926-1933, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

50 T. M. Carrington, president, Richmond Battlefield Parks Corporation, to Eckenrode, 25 September 1930; Eckenrode to Carrington, 27 September 1930, Box 10, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

51 Carson to Eckenrode 22 October, 1931, Box 56, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

THE
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
Sons of Confederate Veterans
JEFFERSON DAVIS
ROBERT E. LEE
GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
Richmond, Virginia
To all who shall see these presents, Greetings:
Know Ye, that reposing special Trust and Confidence in the patriotism, integrity, honor and abilities of:
H. J. Eckenrode
by virtue of the power and authority vested in me by the Constitution, I do hereby Commission him as,
Historian-in-Chief
SONS OF CONFEDERATE VETERANS
He is, therefore, carefully and diligently to discharge the duties of said office according to the Constitution of the Sons of Confederate Veterans. And, I do strictly charge and require all officers and members of the Confederation under him to carry out his orders as an officer of his grade and position and to assist him in the accomplishment of the praiseworthy objects and purposes of the organization. He is to observe and follow such orders and directions, from time to time, as he shall receive from me or other Superior Officers and uphold the principles of the Sons of Confederate Veterans and comply with all rules and regulations prescribed by the Camp, Division and General Organization of the Confederation.
This Commission to continue in force during the pleasure of the Commander-in-Chief, or his term, or for the period for which the aforesaid officer was elected.
In Testimony Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Confederation to be affixed in the City of Richmond, State of Virginia, this 1st day of November 1928
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
OFFICIAL:
ADJUTANT-IN-CHIEF & CHIEF OF STAFF

Figure 2. Virginia State Historian H. J. Eckenrode had also served as Historian in Chief of the SCV. Throughout his career, Eckenrode focused on advancing an interpretation of the Civil War that was sympathetic to the Confederate cause. "The children of the present day are learning history from northern teachers, or from teachers trained in northern schools, and so do not get an adequate idea of the cause for which our fathers fought," he lamented. This valorization of southern heroism downplayed slavery as a central cause of the conflict. (RG 18 Department of Conservation and Development, Division of History Papers Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA. Courtesy of the Library of Virginia.)

Initially, Eckenrode attempted to steer the Richmond Battlefield Corporation toward turning over the land to the NPS. Eckenrode pitched the idea to Horace Albright and reported to Carrington that the Interior Department "was quite anxious to have the battlefields included under their supervision." As Carrington recalled, Virginia conservation officials believed the state "would get more responsible and fairer-minded consideration" from the NPS. Moreover, Eckenrode reported that Albright "definitely promised Mr. Carson that if the Richmond battlefields were turned over to his organization the marking of them would be left entirely in the hands of the Conservation Commission."[52] This approach clearly dovetailed with the state's interest in continuing to control park planning and development without having to outlay the financial resources to accomplish its ambitions.

However, early in 1931, Eckenrode's confidence in the state's ability to steer and direct the actions of the NPS and "influence Albright" began to erode.[53] In part, this was because of developments at Colonial National Monument. Eckenrode was frustrated that NPS planners had not adopted his own ideas for the parkway which was to connect Jamestown, Williamsburg, and Yorktown. According to VCCD Chair William Carson, Albright had assured the state commission that the NPS would rely on the advice of state officials on the layout of the road. The commission had received this news enthusiastically, noting that "such cooperation was welcome as insuring the proper development" of historic areas in the state.[54] As the head of the state's highway marker program, Eckenrode hoped to direct visitors to historic points of interest, but NPS planners determined that the parkway would primarily be a scenic route. "The road across the peninsula as planned is exactly what we do not want," he fumed. "It avoids every historical association and is altogether disappointing."[55]

Likewise, although Albright solicited Eckenrode's recommendation for ranger historians to staff the park, and expressed an interested in hiring "well-trained men, preferably from Virginia," none of the state historian's initial suggestions ultimately found employment at Colonial. Eckenrode recommended established scholars rather than young men who might be interested in forging careers for themselves in the NPS.[56] Even so, Acting NPS Associate Director A. E. Demaray suggested that Eckenrode take a hand in helping to train the park rangers in Virginia colonial history.[57] But the state historian found that the young men working at Yorktown did not always defer to his historical expertise, or that of his assistant, Colonel

52 T. M. Carrington, President Richmond Battlefield Parks Corporation, to Eckenrode, 25 September 1930; Eckenrode to Carrington, 27 September 1930, Box 10, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

53 Eckenrode to Carson, 5 January 1931, Box 56, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

54 VCCD Minutes, 20 June 1930, vol. 5, VA Conservation Commission Minutes and Program Meeting Books, 1926–1933, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

55 Eckenrode to Carson, 5 January 1931.

56 Albright to Eckenrode, 1 December 1930; Albright to Eckenrode, 8 January 1931; Eckenrode to Albright, 13 January 1931, Box 2, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA

57 A. E. Demaray, NPS Acting Associate Director, to Eckenrode, 17 June 1931, Box 14, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

Conrad. Eckenrode reported to Carson that a ranger had rejected Conrad's report on events at Yorktown and was determined to forge ahead with his own investigation. "To my mind this indicates that he is rank amateur in the history line, for no trained historian would expect to work out the details of the siege of Yorktown in a week or two," Eckenrode asserted.[58] The state historian also disparaged the NPS's work at Wakefield, particularly the presentation of a reconstructed room as the site where George Washington was born. "At this rate we shall soon be discovering pieces of the True Cross in Virginia," he quipped.[59]

Eckenrode, an early public historian himself, who served as the first archivist at the Virginia State Library and was the founder of the state's highway marker program, might have offered the disparaging comments as a means of differentiating himself while insisting on a certain degree of deference as an elder statesman. Eckenrode had earned his doctorate from John Hopkins and although he was invested in his public history work with the state of Virginia, he also maintained an active research and publication record. Like many scholars of his generation, Eckenrode believed that this commitment defined him as a "professional" historian. The first two NPS historians hired at Colonial—Elbert Cox and Floyd Flickinger—carried master's degrees from the University of Virginia.[60] After taking on his position at Colonial, Flickinger corresponded apologetically with Eckenrode about the nature of his work in the park. He lamented, "My work here during the past few months has been everything else but professional. Most of my time has been devoted to public contact work. … So far this year I have not been able to tackle a real historical problem." Flickinger indicated the source of his unease was his inability to make progress with what he described as his "private research."[61] In her study of early public historians associated with the NPS, Denise Meringolo noted that many of the field's pioneers expressed "anxiety about their status and professionalism" in their private correspondence, particularly those who engaged in frontline interpretive work.[62] Eckenrode's derisive assessment of the "amateur" history at Colonial National Monument reflected the tension within the broader profession about the definition of a properly "trained historian" and the nature of their work.

Eckenrode's assessment of the work at Colonial directly informed the way he approached the development of the battlefields in Richmond. "The more I see of the US historians," he mused, "the more important I think it is for the state of Virginia to hold on to Richmond."[63] Although Eckenrode preferred the NPS to the War Department, when VCCD

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58 Eckenrode to Carson, 9 September 1931; Eckenrode to Carson, 17 July 1931, Box 56, RG 18, of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

59 Eckenrode to Carson, 19 August 1931, Box 56, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

60 Elbert Cox to Eckenrode, 19 May 1931, Box 10; Flickinger to Southern Historical Society, 5 October 1928, Box 17, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

61 B. F. Flickinger to Eckenrode, 6 June 1932, Box 17, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

62 Denise M. Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks: Toward a New Genealogy of Public History* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 143–144.

63 Eckenrode to Carson, 19 August 1931.

Chair William Carson indicated his preference to develop the battlefields as a state park, the historian embraced the plan as the best option. "Richmond is the one place where we ought to be able to tell our story according to our own ideas and without interference of the Washington authorities," he enthused.[64] Eckenrode also noted that with both Shenandoah and Colonial National Monument under development, work at the Richmond Battlefield might be interminably delayed. He predicted the state could develop the park more quickly, creating the "finest military park in the country" while maintaining the battlefields "in the hands of our own people."[65] These arguments gained traction in and around Richmond. By early fall 1931, the Richmond Battlefield Parks Corporation agreed to turn the land over to the state; in February 1932, the area around Fort Harrison was formerly dedicated as Virginia's first state park.[66]

Shortly after achieving this goal, however, state conservation officials abruptly changed course. The designation of Virginia's first state park came without an appropriation to develop and maintain it. Eckenrode put up some historical markers on the site, but his efforts to use penal labor to develop the park according to his own vision were shut down by VCCD Chair Carson.[67] Moreover, despite the historian's enthusiasm for the project, Carson determined that the battlefield should be under the supervision of the division of parks rather than the division of history. State park planner R. E. Burson proposed to develop the area not only for the benefit of Civil War history enthusiasts, but also for those who sought opportunities for outdoor recreation like hiking, fishing, riding, swimming, and camping. He also dismissed Eckenrode's plans to acquire more land around Richmond and across the state with an eye toward telling a more comprehensive story of the Civil War.[68] These competing visions created tension within the Virginia State Commission on Conservation and Development.[69] But the state did not have the funds to put either Eckenrode or Burson's plans in motion. Eckenrode later recalled that "Private purses, in the depression, could not bear the strain of clearing and maintenance," but neither could state appropriations. "The state had no money for the development of parks—an expensive business," he wrote. "Barbering land, cutting

64 Carson to Eckenrode, 2 January 1931; Eckenrode to Carson, 5 January 1931; Eckenrode to Carson, 17 July 1931; Eckenrode to Carson, 30 July 1931, Box 56, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

65 Eckenrode to Carson, 17 July 1931.

66 Carson to All Members of State Commission on Conservation and Development, 19 August 1931, Box 65; H. J. Eckenrode, *History of the Richmond Battlefield Parks*, 23 February 1932, Box 42, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

67 Carson to Eckenrode, 28 March 1932, Box 56; Carson to Eckenrode, 29 March 1932, Box 56, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

68 R. E. Burson, "An Interim Report on the Development of the Area Commonly Known as the Richmond Battlefield Parks," n.d., Box 42, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

69 Eckenrode to Carson, 29 March 1932, Box 56; Carson to Eckenrode, 30 March 1932, Box 56; Eckenrode Memorandum acknowledging Burson's authority over Richmond Battlefield Park, n.d., Box 56, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

out unnecessary trees and rooting out bushes and weeds, take a great deal of back-breaking labor. . . . With appropriations out to the limit, nothing more was possible."[70]

Consequently, state officials moved aggressively to make the most of two new developments in the summer of 1933: the transfer of Civil War battlefields from the War Department to the NPS by executive order, and the creation of the CCC. As noted above, Virginia would use CCC labor to develop its plans for six recreational parks, but the news that the NPS would be managing battlefields reignited the idea of transferring the park in Richmond to the federal government. VCCD Chair Carson reported to the Commission that transferring the battlefields would "relieve the State of the expense which it is financially unable to undertake at this time" and ensure development that was consistent with the other battlefields in the state.[71] Eckenrode also hoped that the NPS might be able to use Emergency Conservation Work funding to enlarge as well as develop the site.[72]

Achieving this transfer required repairing relationships with the NPS and persuading both the Richmond Battlefield Parks Corporation (which had just transferred the property to the state) and state legislators that federal rather than state control was what was desired. Eckenrode despaired that NPS Director Cammerer did not seem "enthusiastic" about acquiring Richmond Battlefield Park. "We must convince them that the Richmond Park is worth having and worth spending some money on to complete," the historian asserted. "Their battlefield park system would be sadly disorganized without the central park at Richmond."[73] Eckenrode called on southern historian and Richmond newspaper editor Douglas S. Freeman to entertain Cammerer in the state's capital and bring him around to the idea.[74] The NPS ultimately acceded to the plan, as well as the potential acquisition of Appomattox and Manassas, provided the "initiative" came from the state. As Eckenrode reported after a conversation with A. E. Demaray, "he does not want it to appear that the Park Service is trying to get these places."[75]

This was a significant challenge. Just a few years earlier Eckenrode had worked assiduously behind-the-scenes to prevent the transfer of the park to the NPS. Now, he called on Freeman to write an editorial which would address any opposition to the idea of transferring the battlefields to the federal government by publicly acknowledging that the state was not in a position to develop the property.[76] He also returned to the Richmond Battlefield Parks Corporation to persuade them to endorse the proposal. Eckenrode informed the board that since they had transferred the land to the state, "great changes have occurred in the attitude

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70 Eckenrode, "The Richmond Battlefield Park," n.d., Box 42, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

71 VCCD Minutes, 3 June 1933, VA Conservation Commission Minutes and Program Meeting Books, 1926–1933, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

72 Eckenrode to Carson, 15 September 1933.

73 Eckenrode to Carson, 15 September 1933.

74 Eckenrode to Carson, 20 September 1933, Box 56, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

75 Eckenrode to Carson, 7 October 1933, Box 56, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

76 Eckenrode to Freeman, 15 January 1934, Box 60, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

of the Federal Government toward projects of this kind," noting the control of the NPS over battlefield development and their interest in "historical accuracy" as well as the use of "trained historians to direct the general landscaping." The corporation, which had always primarily been interested in the development of the site, was sympathetic to the idea and urged the state to open negotiations with the Department of Interior related to the transfer.[77]

Director Cammerer reported news of these developments to Secretary Ickes in September 1933. "Virginia is so pleased over what has been done by this office in all the national park and monument areas in the State, that the State is desirous to turn over the Richmond Battlefield area to you for your administration by this office," the director stated. Although the secretary declined to join Cammerer for his tour of the battlefields with Eckenrode and Freeman, he expressed his approval of the idea. Cammerer suggested that the transformation of the state's opinion of the NPS's work in Virginia was a byproduct of the productive relationships that state conservation officials had established with representatives of the Interior Department. Their determination to transfer Richmond Battlefield Park "is one of the most remarkable tributes that could be paid to you and your organization," he wrote.[78]

State legislators proved more difficult to convince. Both Eckenrode and Freeman appeared before the state legislative committee formally considering the proposal. Carson instructed them, "Be sure to develop the idea that we opposed the War Department getting the park but always favored having it go to the National Park Department as they were a neutral body and willing to have Virginia historians act on all questions relative to Virginia."[79] These assurances were not enough. State legislators sought to attach a variety of provisions to the bill authorizing the transfer, including a proposal that a commission consisting of appointees from both the state and the federal government would oversee the NPS's administration of the area.[80] NPS Chief Historian Verne Chatelain and A. E. Demaray told Eckenrode that such a commission would overly complicate administrative matters, but agreed unofficially that they could endorse a bill which included a clause stating "that all markers and monuments in the park should be submitted to the Conservation Commission" for approval (see Figure 3).[81] Ultimately the bill enacted by the General Assembly included the proviso that "no marker shall be erected, moved or destroyed, and no change, alteration or abrasion shall be made in the park area without the consent of the Virginia Commission on Conservation and Development." The bill also indicated that if the US government failed to "properly maintain" the site,

77 Drafted memorandum of suggestions on part of Richmond Battlefield Park Corporation to VCCD, 26 October 1933, Box 42, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

78 Ickes to Cammerer, 30 September 1933; Cammerer to Ickes, 28 September 1933, Box 6, Entry 766 Ickes Papers, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

79 Carson to Eckenrode, 7 February 1934, Box 56, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

80 Eckenrode to Carson, 14 February 1934, Box 56, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

81 Eckenrode to Carson, 15 February 1934, Box 56, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

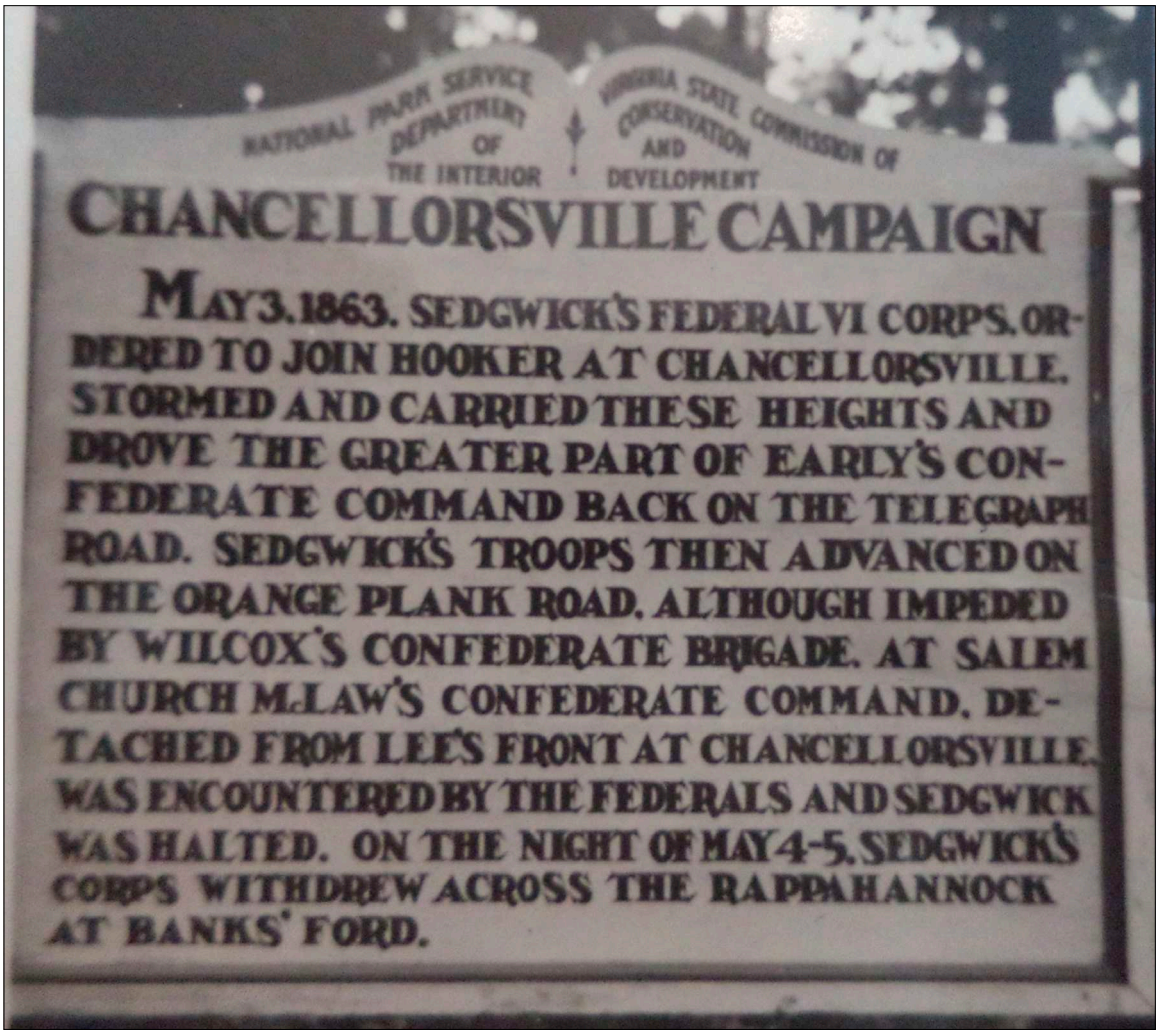
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT
OF
THE INTERIOR
VIRGINIA STATE COMMISSION OF
CONSERVATION
AND
DEVELOPMENT
CHANCELLORSVILLE CAMPAIGN
MAY 3. 1863. SEDGWICK'S FEDERAL VI CORPS. ORDERED TO JOIN HOOKER AT CHANCELLORSVILLE. STORMED AND CARRIED THESE HEIGHTS AND DROVE THE GREATER PART OF EARLY'S CONFEDERATE COMMAND BACK ON THE TELEGRAPH ROAD. SEDGWICK'S TROOPS THEN ADVANCED ON THE ORANGE PLANK ROAD. ALTHOUGH IMPEDED BY WILCOX'S CONFEDERATE BRIGADE. AT SALEM CHURCH McLAW'S CONFEDERATE COMMAND, DETACHED FROM LEE'S FRONT AT CHANCELLORSVILLE, WAS ENCOUNTERED BY THE FEDERALS AND SEDGWICK WAS HALTED. ON THE NIGHT OF MAY 4-5, SEDGWICK'S CORPS WITHDREW ACROSS THE RAPPAHANNOCK AT BANKS' FORD.

Figure 3. Cooperation between the Virginia State Commission on Conservation and Development and the NPS is evident on this early marker from Chancellorsville Battlefield. (Box 68, RG 18 Department of Conservation and Development, Division of History Papers Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA. Courtesy of the Library of Virginia.)

control would revert back to Virginia.[82] These behind-the-scenes conversations and legislative maneuvers illustrate how state officials sought to control and direct the development of national parks in Virginia. Notably, state legislators did not feel it was necessary to add specific provisions about racial segregation—a clear indication they had no concerns about how this issue would be addressed by the NPS.

As these conversations were underway, development of the area around Fort Harrison proceeded with the acquisition of an African American CCC camp operated under the super-

82 *Laws of Virginia Relating to State Commission on Conservation and Development* (Richmond: Division of Purchase Printing, 1935), Chap. 285, p. 41. See also Timothy B. Smith, *Altogether Fitting and Proper: Civil War Battlefield Preservation in History, Memory, and Policy, 1861–2015* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2017), 117.

vision of the NPS. The Virginia State Commission on Conservation and Development agreed to continue to cooperate in an "advisory capacity," but VCCD Chair Carson made a formal request that both Eckenrode and Freeman be formally named as "historical consultants" not only in Richmond, but at all battlefield parks in Virginia. This was desirable, Carson maintained, "so that the traditions of Virginia may be preserved."[83] The Department of Interior acceded to this proposal, sending formal letters of appointment which praised both men's "splendid assistance in the form of advice and recommendations in the past" and promised a cooperative relationship in the future.[84] More privately, shortly before retiring, Director Albright wrote Eckenrode stating that it was the NPS's intention to allow Virginia officials "to formulate plans for the development of the historical program." Historical technician Branch Spalding, who would later become coordinating superintendent of Virginia's battlefield parks, was directed to "refer matters of policy" to Eckenrode and Freeman before submitting them to Washington. All historical projects were to be subject to their approval. "The National Park Service is genuinely pleased to be able to contribute to Richmond Battlefield program," Albright wrote, "and it is our desire to satisfy everyone in Virginia who has that program at heart."[85] To facilitate the close relationship between state and federal officials, Spalding's assistant Floyd Taylor would work directly out of the Virginia State Commission on Conservation and Development's office.[86]

Virginia officials were very satisfied with this arrangement as it provided them with considerable interpretive control, and few fiscal or administrative challenges. "The plan for the development of the Richmond Park is largely in your hands and mine," Eckenrode wrote triumphantly to Freeman.[87] The NPS, he later mused more circumspectly, was able to work effectively in the state "without jarring the susceptibilities of many people" through a combination of "tact and good management."[88]

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83 Carson to Col. R. A. Gilliam, Executive Secretary State Commission on Conservation and Development, 6 June 1933, Box 56, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

84 Cammerer to Freeman, 7 September 1933; Cammerer to Eckenrode, 8 September 1933, Box 10, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

85 Albright to Eckenrode, 21 June 1933, Box 2, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

86 Verne E. Chatelain, NPS Chief Historian, to Eckenrode, 22 June 1933, Box 11; Spalding to Eckenrode, 26 June 1933, Box 68, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

87 Eckenrode to Freeman, 20 June 1933, Box 60, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

88 Eckenrode, Letter drafted for Secretary Ickes from Wilbur Hall, 25 May 1935, Box 60, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

Staffing the Parks with Virginia Men

On the local level, the Virginia State Commission on Conservation and Development sought to staff the burgeoning array of national parks in the state with "Virginia men." The explosion of emergency conservation work across Virginia during the New Deal provided one vehicle for doing so, as supervisory appointments in the CCC camps were often distributed through political patronage.[89] Men like Branch Spalding, who gained a foothold through emergency conservation work, could move into more permanent positions in the NPS. When making this transition, the NPS viewed the ability to work cooperatively with state officials as a desirable trait for potential hires. Spalding, for example, requested a formal letter of recommendation from H. J. Eckenrode as he was considered for the position of superintendent at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park.[90] Spalding had worked closely with Eckenrode in Richmond, and NPS administrators in Washington considered it a point in his favor that he had "won the confidence of Eckenrode and Conrad."[91] Floyd Taylor, the junior park research technician who had worked directly out of Eckenrode's office was formally placed in charge of Richmond National Battlefield Park.[92] Elbert Cox who ultimately became superintendent of Colonial National Historical Park and later southeast regional director, also sought Eckenrode's endorsement when he applied for a position as an assistant park historian at Colonial early in his career.[93] As superintendent of Shenandoah National Park, J. R. Lassiter was praised in the local press as a native Virginian who understood the concerns of citizens in the region. *The Richmond Times-Dispatch* observed, "A man who has made contacts with the leaders in an area, who has won their confidence, who knows local sentiment, and who has been carrying out his duties satisfactorily, certainly seems in a better position to deliver the goods than one brought in from a totally different section, who has to spend years learning the ropes."[94] As will be discussed in the chapters that follow, many of the men who populated Virginia parks' staff and regional planning offices conveyed their understanding of "local sentiment" to national officials in conversations surrounding NPS segregation policy and its application in the parks.

The appointment of White Virginian men to roles in national parks in the state was also openly used to persuade organizations like the SCV that their interpretations of history

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89 Cammerer to Ickes, 23 November 1933, Box 10, Entry 766, 48, NARA, College Park, MD. For a detailed examination of patronage in Virginia during the New Deal see Cash Koeniger, "The New Deal and the States: Roosevelt Versus the Byrd Organization in Virginia," *The Journal of American History,* vol. 68 no. 4 (March 1982): 876–896.

90 Spalding to Eckenrode, 16 October 1933, Box 68, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

91 Chatelain to Tolson, Demaray and Taylor, 12 July 1934, Box 2467, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

92 Memorandum from NPS Acting Associate Director to All Field Offices, 10 December 1938, Box 2597, Entry 10.2, RG 79.

93 Elbert Cox to Eckenrode, 19 May 1931, Box 10, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

94 "Mr. Lassiter and the Park," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 10, 1941.

and their needs as potential visitors would be taken into consideration by the NPS. This was particularly evident in the controversy surrounding the transfer of Manassas Battlefield to the federal government. The preservation effort surrounding Manassas was initially conceived as a Confederate military park that would stand in contrast to those built by "the North and the Federal Government" at Gettysburg and Antietam. Promoters like E. W. R. Ewing asserted that Manassas would appropriately memorialize "*all Confederate* soldiers and the *women of the South"* who sacrificed during the Civil War.[95] Ewing did not embrace the reconciliationist rhetoric that shaped battlefield preservation efforts elsewhere with their commissions made up of both Union and Confederate veterans. As historian Timothy B. Smith has argued, E. W. R. Ewing framed his appeal for contributions "strictly for Confederate and Lost Cause memorialization."[96] However, by 1935, both Manassas Battlefield Corporation (which held the property in trust for the SCV) and the Virginia State Commission on Conservation and Development were pushing for the property to be incorporated into the NPS's system of battlefield parks in the state.[97] The leadership of the SCV itself opposed the transfer on the grounds that it had not been authorized by the general organization, and that the trustees on the board of the corporation had acted outside the scope of their authority in opening up negotiations with the NPS.[98] The *Richmond News Leader* suggested the SCV feared that the battlefield would be "defaced with monuments and inscriptions that belie the facts of history." But newspaper editor Douglas S. Freeman, who also served as an official NPS historic consultant for Virginia's battlefield parks, assured his readers that this fear was "wholly unfounded" and pointed to the Virginia State Commission on Conservation and Development's oversight at Fredericksburg, Petersburg, and Richmond as evidence of the NPS's "nonpartisan" approach to interpretation. Freeman also pointed to the role that former SCV Historian in Chief H. J. Eckenrode also played in this process.[99]

At the invitation of Walter Hopkins, adjutant in chief of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, the NPS sent Virginia Battlefield Coordinating Superintendent Branch Spalding to the annual convention of the SCV to persuade them to rescind their objection to the transfer. Spalding had several relatives who served as officers in the Sons, and before traveling to the convention, he formally joined the organization himself. Spalding reported from Louisiana that the "opposition was astonishingly violent." He wrote, "If I could have foreseen what

95 Ewing to Southern Friend, 28 May 1923; "Who Endorse the Manassas Battlefield Confederate Park?" brochure, Box 44, Trinkle Executive Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

96 Timothy B. Smith, *Altogether Fitting and Proper,* 97–98.

97 Edmond R. Wiles, Chair, Manassas Battlefield Foundation, to Albright, 11 July 1933, Box 2596a, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA; Eckenrode to Chatelain, 28 May 1934, Box 11, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

98 Walter Hopkins, Commander in Chief of SCV to Wilbur Hall, 8 July 1935; Hopkins to John Rust, president of Manassas Battlefield Confederate Park, 31 October 1935; NPS Acting Director A. E. Demaray to Clifton Woodrum, 6 March 1935, Box 2596a, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA.

99 "VA Battlefield Park Area May Be Greatest in World," *Richmond News Leader,* editorial, 24 January 1936, Box 2474, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA II.

an undertaking it was I should hardly have had the courage to attempt the swinging of this thing." Despite his trepidation, Spalding successfully persuaded the Sons that NPS historians would approach their work with professionalism and preserve the battlefield in accordance with their wishes.[100] His arguments were reflected in the formal resolution adopted by the Sons in June 1936 removing their objections to the transfer of Manassas to the NPS. "The Park Service practices a strict observance of historical authenticity in presenting these areas. The method of presentation is rigorously factual and uncolored by bias," the resolution read. However, the next part of the resolution suggested that the Sons believed an appropriately sectional perspective would ensure that the "facts" as they viewed them were well represented. "The personnel of the Service in the Virginia areas is composed mainly of Virginians, the present coordinating superintendent—the superintendent of all the battlefields in Virginia—is Mr. Branch Spalding, a native Virginian," and the organization noted, "a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans."[101] Hopkins later wrote Director Cammerer and praised Spalding effusively. "I believe that he is the only person in Virginia or elsewhere who could have secured the consent of the Sons of Confederate Veterans to the conveyance of this property," Hopkins wrote. Spalding had successfully persuaded the majority of the membership at the convention to reverse their former opinion, convincing them the development of a national park at Manassas was in "the best interest of the Sons, the South, and the Nation."[102]

A Shared Culture of Segregation and New Divisions

Although the appointment of Virginia men was viewed as an important accomplishment by state leaders, in Washington itself, segregation was also practiced openly in the offices of the federal government. Indeed, the Department of Interior and the NPS were just beginning to come to terms with their own traditions of segregation within the ranks of the federal bureaucracy in the late 1920s and early 1930s. As the culture of the Department of Interior shifted during this period, liberal and progressive appointees ushered in with the Roosevelt administration found themselves working alongside established staff who objected to meaningful racial or social change.

In 1927, just as Arno B. Cammerer was ironing out the details of Shenandoah National Park's final boundary in cooperation with state conservation officials, the Washington, DC, branch of the NAACP publicly protested the creation of an all-Black Files Division in the Department of Interior Pensions Office. Thirty-six of the forty-two African American clerks

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100 Cammerer to Acting Secretary of Interior, 16 April 1936; Spalding to Cammerer, 11 June 1936; Spalding to Walter Scott Hancock, Commander in Chief Sons of Confederate Veterans, 26 June 1936, Box 2596a, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA.

101 Resolution adopted by the Sons of Confederate Veterans, 41st Annual Convention, Shreveport, LA, 9–12 June 1936, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

102 Hopkins to Cammerer, 30 November 1937, Box 2596a, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA.

who had been reorganized into the segregated unit formally presented a complaint to Secretary of Interior Hubert Work, and Black employees in other divisions of the department filed petitions in support of their protest.[103] During a meeting with Neval H. Thomas, president of the Washington NAACP, Work defended the creation of the all-Black unit in the name of efficiency and dismissed Thomas as an "outsider" meddling in government affairs. In a public letter, Thomas retorted that he was a tax-paying citizen with a vested interest in the business of the federal government. "Color and efficiency have no possible relation," Thomas wrote. "The congregation of nearly all your Colored employees in one division is no accident. It is segregation pure and simple." Thomas reported that the Secretary of Interior had asked him if the Black employees in the department were protesting the change because they sought closer contact with White women. Thomas rejected this insinuation. Their goal, he averred, was "to rise to the level of their merit and to have their government refrain from stigmatizing them as pariahs, an insult that will work discriminations in salaries, working conditions, and character of work."[104] As the conflict between the two men became public, Work reversed his position and restored all employees affected by the transfers back to their previous positions.[105] He also removed the physical barriers and partitions which had previously separated White and Black employees in the General Land Office.[106] By August 1928, the NAACP reported that segregation was no longer "flagrant" in the Department of Interior. Lavatories were no longer segregated, although the cafeteria in the building run by a concessionaire continued to separate diners.[107]

The practice of racial segregation within the Department of Interior would be abandoned even more decisively with the confirmation of Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes in March 1933. While Secretary Work had found himself in direct and public conflict with the NAACP, Secretary Ickes was a former president of the Chicago branch of the organization and was well-known as a strong supporter of civil rights and liberties. As Secretary of Interior, he moved quickly to eliminate the last vestiges of racial separation from the department by desegregating the cafeteria.[108] Walter White, Executive Secretary of the NAACP, praised Ickes for

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103 Pension Bureau Employees to Hubert Work, August 1927, Box 403, Part I:C Administrative File, 1885–1949, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

104 "Secretary Work Resents 'Outsiders' Meddling in Interior Dept. Segregation," press release, 30 September 1927, Box 403, Part I:C Administrative File, 1885–1949, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

105 "Hard Fight Won After Heated Tilt," *The Chicago Defender*, 15 October 1927; "NAACP Wins Fight Against Washington, DC, Segregation," press release, Box 403, Part I:C Administrative File, 1885–1949, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

106 "Segregation in Interior Department Ended by H. Work; Letter is Sent to Treasury Department Demanding a Definite Statement," *The Chicago Whip,* 28 April 1928.

107 Mr. Andrews, "Report on Segregation in Government Departments," 10–17 August 1928, Box 403, Part I:C Administrative File, 1885-1949, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

108 Patricia Sullivan, *Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the New Deal Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 53.

having the "vision and courage" to set "an example for other cabinet officers and governmental agencies."[109] Nevertheless, despite this praise, Walter White and other civil rights advocates would continue to place pressure on Ickes to move beyond symbolic gestures toward the systemic deconstruction of racial segregation and discrimination in the areas under his purview as Secretary of Interior. In relation to addressing the segregation of the national parks, as the pages that follow will illustrate, Ickes adopted a gradualist posture shaped by political calculation which tempered his advocacy for African American civil rights.

Secretary Ickes was also prodded to act by members of his own department who called for more sweeping change. Ickes appointed African American men and White progressives to important positions in his administration, particularly to positions as "Advisers on Negro Affairs" and within the Department of Interior's Solicitors Office. Ickes hired Clark Foreman and Robert C. Weaver as Advisers on the Economic Status of Negroes, with the intention that the two men, White and Black respectively, would monitor Black participation in federal recovery efforts. Foreman had previously worked for the Commission on Interracial Cooperation and the Rosenwald Fund.[110] Weaver, a native of Washington, DC, had helped found the Negro Industrial League, and would go on to become the first Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and the first African American appointed to a cabinet position.[111] At Interior, the salaries of both men were subsidized by the Rosenwald Fund so they could not be targeted by southern congressmen opposed to their findings and recommendations.[112] Later, W. J. Trent would join the ranks of advisers and would be instrumental in pushing for the desegregation of southern national parks. He worked closely and cooperatively with civil rights organizations to push for change within the strictures of the federal bureaucracy.

In the solicitor's office, Ickes hired solicitor Nathan Margold who had worked closely with the NAACP to establish a strategy for challenging the constitutionality of segregation in the courts, rather than pushing for the equalization of facilities. The Margold Report, as it was known, served as a blueprint for the civil rights organization and ultimately helped pave the road to the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision.[113] Another veteran of the NAACP, the African American attorney William Hastie joined Margold as assistant solicitor. Hastie would work for the Department from 1933 to 1937 before President Roosevelt appointed him as the nation's first African American federal judge and he went on to serve as the Dean of Howard University's Law School.[114] In 1938, Phineas Indritz joined the solicitor's office. Indritz later

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109 Walter White to Harold Ickes, 4 February 1952, Box 322; Part II:A General Office File, 1940-1955, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

110 Sullivan, *Days of Hope,* 25–40.

111 Sullivan, *Days of Hope*, 46–50.

112 Sullivan, *Days of Hope,* 24–25. See also John Egerton, *Speak Now Against the Day* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 92-93.

113 Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: The History of* Brown v. Board of Education *and Black America's Struggle for Equality* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), 133–136.

114 Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 159.

served as national counsel for the American Veterans Committee, an interracial organization of World War II veterans that challenged racial segregation in Washington, DC, at restaurants and places of public assembly. Indritz also presented oral argument in *Shelly v. Kramer* (1948), which formally struck down racial covenants in real estate.[115] Collectively, these men were at the cutting edge of undermining the legal arguments that sustained the practice of segregation. As will be discussed in chapter four, while working at the Department of Interior they marshalled legal arguments in support of abandoning the policy of racial segregation in the southern national parks.

In the 1930s and early 1940s, officials in the NPS found themselves sitting at the center of conflict between these competing constituencies. State conservation officials worked tirelessly to establish a comprehensive system of Civil War battlefields, national historic parks, and areas of scenic beauty within the state of Virginia. Although they hoped to benefit from the resources and expertise of the NPS, they also sought to control park development in the state through a variety of strategies, including informal administrative agreements, restrictive enabling legislation, official federal appointments as consultants, and efforts to staff local national parks with "Virginia men." Although NPS officials were eager to work cooperatively and productively with their state counterparts to realize their ambitious plans for establishing a staggering number of new parks in the southern states, they simultaneously faced pressure from the new guard in the Department of Interior to develop equitable, nondiscriminatory, and ultimately desegregated facilities for all Americans. At this crucial juncture in the late 1930s, NPS administrators like Director Arno B. Cammerer crafted and actively defended the racial segregation of visitor facilities in the southern parks. Only a coordinated effort orchestrated between civil rights advocates inside and outside of the federal bureaucracy forced a reconsideration of this approach, leading to a series of experiments with integration and the adoption of a nondiscrimination policy in 1945. The shifting terrain of NPS policy over the course of these years reveals both the opportunities presented by Roosevelt's New Deal for African American citizens across the nation, as well as its limitations as local rangers, park superintendents, regional planning officers, and administrative officials in the NPS came to terms with altering established practice.

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115 See Phineas Indritz, "Brief of Great Washington Area Council of American Veterans Committee, Inc.," Amicus Curiae, *District of Columbia v. John R. Thompson Company, Inc.*, 19 September 1950, Box 2968, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD; "Phineas Indritz Dies at 81," obituary, *Washington Post,* 18 October 1997.

CHAPTER TWO

Emergency Conservation Work

As the Virginia State Commission on Conservation and Development sought ways to collaborate productively with the NPS to create the parks that would serve as the backbone of Virginia's "scenic historyland," the onset of the Great Depression fundamentally changed the financial calculus for state officials like historian H. J. Eckenrode. The availability of state funds to develop a site like Richmond Battlefield Park had always been in question, but in the midst of the financial crisis, the likelihood that the Virginia legislature would appropriate the funds necessary to develop the park became even more attenuated. However, the announcement of the creation of a new work relief program dedicated to Emergency Conservation Work (ECW), popularly known as the CCC, opened up a new field of possibilities. Considered President Roosevelt's "pet project," the CCC was an emergency work relief program designed to put young, unemployed, single men to work developing parks, protecting national forests, and addressing soil conservation projects. During the 1930s, Virginia officials worked closely with the NPS to develop not only Richmond's battlefields but the first six recreational parks in the state with segregated CCC labor. National parks in the state, which remained relatively undeveloped in the early 1930s, were also transformed by the labor of CCC enrollees who reshaped the landscape, uncovered the history associated with the sites, and constructed the earliest facilities for visitors.

Establishing Camps in Virginia

Virginia hosted a large number of CCC camps. Powerful political figures like Senators Harry Byrd and Carter Glass consistently sought to thwart the Roosevelt administration's New Deal coalition. Despite their general hostility to relief programs, they campaigned vigorously for the placement of CCC camps in the state. Congressmen routinely appealed to the CCC, the White House, and the Departments of Interior and Agriculture for camps in their districts, but Virginia legislators appear to have been more successful than most. In 1933, Byrd boasted that Virginia had "more than our quota of federal positions, and more than any other state due to our proximity to Washington." At the conclusion of the CCC's work, Virgin-

ia ranked fourth in the nation in relation to the total number of camps established in the state. Many of these camps were located in state and national parks.[1]

Southern political leaders helped to shape the CCC in other important ways as well. When the legislation creating the CCC was debated, Illinois Congressman Oscar DePriest introduced an amendment to the bill prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, or creed.[2] Nevertheless, CCC camps throughout the nation would be segregated. In part, this practice was shaped by the tradition of segregation in the armed services. CCC enrollees were recruited by local relief agencies, but they were physically conditioned and prepared for their work in the Corps by the Army. Within the national parks, White military officers led by a company commander supervised the activities of the enrollees in camp, while the NPS staff led by a project superintendent oversaw the work of the enrollees in the field.[3] CCC Director Fechner, a southerner by birth, maintained that the CCC could be segregated without discriminating provided that camps for Black and White enrollees were equal.[4]

Segregation within the CCC became more pronounced over time. Early on, in some states with relatively low numbers of African American residents, Black enrollees were integrated into predominantly White camps. In southern states like Virginia, African American men were segregated from the outset, although small groups of White local enlisted men (LEMs) were sometimes associated with Black camps to do work that was not considered suitable for their Black counterparts, like direct engagement with visitors at park contact stations. This practice changed in 1935, when Director Fechner determined that even this limited integration was undesirable. White LEMs were removed from African American camps, and African American enrollees were transferred to all-Black camps, even if this required transportation outside of their state of origin.[5]

By 1935, Virginia hosted seventeen African American CCC camps, the highest number in the nation.[6] Many of these camps operated under the supervision of the NPS. At its peak, five African American CCC camps were located at Colonial National Monument, with four placed at Yorktown. The fifth camp was located in Williamsburg and enrollees were transported to Jamestown daily for their work projects. One of the camps at Colonial was a "colored veterans" camp. Once this veterans' camp was no longer needed on the peninsula it was trans-

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1 John P. Byrne, "Civilian Conservation Corps in Virginia, 1933–1942" (MA Thesis, University of Montana, 1982), 14–18, 30, 48, 66–67. See also John A. Salmond, *The Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933–1942: A New Deal Case Study* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1967), 62, 102.

2 John C. Paige, "The Civilian Conservation Corps and the NPS," *Administrative History* (1985), 10; Salmond, *The Civilian Conservation Corps,* 23.

3 The exception to this general practice was Company 1355 at Gettysburg National Military Park.

4 Robert Fechner to Thomas L. Griffith, president, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 21 September 1935, General Correspondence of the Director, Box 700, RG 35, NARA, College Park, MD.

5 Robert Fechner to Senator Robert J. Buckley, 4 June 1936, General Correspondence of the Director, Box 700, RG 35, NARA, College Park, MD.

6 "17,000 Negroes are Listed in 472 CCC Camps," *New Journal and Guide* (Norfolk, VA), 30 March 1935.

ferred to Appomattox Court House, where enrollees helped restore the nineteenth-century landscape and recreate historic structures. Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park hosted two African American CCC camps at one point, but White camps also labored on separate battlefields within the park. African American CCC camps were also located in Virginia state parks, including a camp established at Fort Harrison in Richmond and others at Matoaka, Alexandria Battery Cove, and Seashore State Park. African American enrollees also worked on the dam project which created Prince Edward recreational lake, the site of the only recreational area controlled by the state that was ultimately designated for African American use. In the state parks, CCC projects were completed with NPS technical oversight.

Work relief programs like the CCC were designed to address widespread unemployment. During the Depression, African American unemployment rates were twice as high as the national average. Some New Deal programs that were designed to curb agricultural overproduction and stabilize prices actually provided White landowners with an incentive to evict African American tenant farmers and sharecroppers.[7] Those who worked in other industries were frequently the "first fired, last hired." The Julius Rosenwald Fund and civil rights organizations appealed to the CCC to enroll African Americans in proportion to their representation among the unemployed, but Director Fechner refused to do so. Instead, the CCC enrolled Black men in proportion to their percentage of the population. In practice, this meant that only ten percent of the men enrolled into the CCC were African American.[8]

This decision to maintain a strict quota of African American enrollees regardless of economic need was compounded by other decisions made by the director. As CCC camps were established around the nation, the reactions of local populations were decidedly mixed. Some welcomed the economic investment enrollees would bring to their communities. The Virginia Department of Public Welfare determined that CCC camps contributed $315,000 every month to the state's economy.[9] But local residents also expressed anxiety about the influx of unemployed young men to their communities.[10] This kind of resistance was amplified in the case of African American CCC camps. The Associated Negro Press acerbically noted that White southerners "rather enjoy seeing Negroes" labor on public works projects like roads, provided such services were provided by "convicts and under surveillance of armed guards." However, when CCC men performed similar kinds of labor in the absence of "ball and chains, shackles and the armed watcher," protests erupted.[11]

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7 Robert C. Weaver, "The New Deal and the Negro: A Look at the Facts," *Opportunity: Journal of Negro Life* (July 1935). See also Salmond, *The Civilian Conservation Corps,* 88, 99–100.

8 Salmond, *The Civilian Conservation Corps,* 88, 94, 99–100. Robert Fechner to Senator Robert J. Buckley, 4 June 1936, General Correspondence of the Director, Box 700, RG 35, NARA, College Park, MD.

9 Byrne, "Civilian Conservation Corps," 23.

10 Paige, "The Civilian Conservation Corps," 89; Conrad Wirth, *Park, Politics, and the People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 106.

11 "Locating of Timber Troop Camps Near Whites Hits," *New Journal and Guide,* 6 July 1935; Paige, "The Civilian Conservation Corps," 94.

Local Opposition and Its Impacts

There were reports of White complaints in all three communities in Virginia that had African American camps in nearby national parks—Fredericksburg, Williamsburg, and Appomattox. In Fredericksburg, local residents protested when the CCC decided to replace a White camp at Chancellorsville with African American Company 362. Residents expressed particular concern about the disruptions that African American "outsiders" might cause in relation to the established racial order. State Senator C. O'Conor Goolrick maintained that residents would not have been concerned if the prospective enrollees were proper Southerners who understood established local custom. Ultimately, only the threat to remove the camp entirely quashed this local resistance movement. Local representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and city officials did not want to lose either the immediate economic investment the camp represented or its long-term contribution to park development and tourism in the region. Residents were also appeased when they learned that most of the enrollees in the camp were from Virginia.[12] Even so, enrollees were aware of the hostility that surrounded them and described the isolation they experienced as a result. In the first issue of the camp's newspaper *The Blow Out*, LaFond Watkins described his arrival at Camp Chancellorsville in August 1935. He recalled, "I had been transplanted to a place where there was not a man who could be called friend … It seemed that every hand was turned against us and that every voice held a rough challenge to us who had dared enter the sacred portals of this camp. We were strangers in a strange land and nowhere it seemed was there one to say welcome stranger." In this context, young enrollees relied on each other and the men who had been designated as leaders within camp for support.[13]

As African American enrollees labored to reshape the battlefields' landscapes, the NPS regional office in Richmond and local staff at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park actively petitioned for their removal.[14] In 1936, the White veterans' camp in Spotsylvania closed; in late 1939 and early 1940, the White camp at Wilderness Battlefield was also targeted for reduction. Park Superintendent Branch Spaulding appealed to the regional director to move the White enrollees to Chancellorsville, and close the Black camp instead. In 1940, the Third Corps implemented this request and the White men at Wilderness replaced their African American counterparts in Company 362 at Chancellorsville.[15] Nationally, securing positions in the CCC became more and more difficult for African American enrollees

12 Joan Zenzen, "At the Crossroads of Preservation and Development: A History of Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park," Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park (FRSP) Administrative History (August 2011), 67–68.

13 Lafond Watkins, "Eulogizing 'Pop' Brooks," *The Blow Out,* 15 November 1935, 3, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

14 Acting Regional NPS Director Herbert Evison to Third Corps Liaison Officer Stanton G. Smith, 28 October 1937, RG 79, Entry 65: Memoranda and Correspondence Concerning CCC Camps, FRSP Bound Volumes, Chatham Manor, Fredericksburg, VA.

15 Zenzen, "At the Crossroads," 83–84.

as the number of camps was reduced in the late 1930s. NAACP Executive Secretary Walter White appealed to Director Fechner to reconsider his decision to only enlist men according to a strict population quota because re-employment statistics indicated that White men were being hired for new jobs at a higher rate than Black men. Fechner refused to consider such a readjustment.[16] In light of this decision, and the fact that Black enrollees tended to stay in the CCC longer than their White counterparts (because of the lack of opportunity outside of the camps), African American recruitment was primarily restricted to replacing men who had been "mustered out" as a result of Expiration of Term of Enrollment (ETE), typically 24 months of service, and those who had exceeded the age limit.[17]

The White NPS staff associated with Company 362 at Chancellorsville were relocated to Appomattox Court House to guide and direct the work of CCC Company 1351, a "colored veterans'" camp which had been formerly located at Yorktown. Enrollees in this camp were World War I veterans, selected for enlistment by the Veterans Administration rather than the Labor Department. President Roosevelt had invited veterans to enlist in the CCC after veterans' groups protested his decision to cut veterans benefits in an effort to attain a balanced budget in 1933. ETE did not apply to veterans' camps, and veteran enrollees could re-enlist without restriction. Veterans worked in separate camps and on account of their age were assigned less arduous manual labor and were frequently called on to do skilled work. At Yorktown, the veterans' camp helped to restore the French Battery on the battlefield and constructed visitor facilities and exhibition cases. They also participated in archeological excavations. NPS officials noted that the veterans' familiarity with military fortifications greatly aided these tasks and praised the work ethic of Company 1351. "With the setup of four camps in one area [Yorktown], three of which are juniors and the fourth a veterans company, it inevitably follows that comparisons will be drawn but it must be said in all fairness that the veterans have stood out in their work, although no attempt is made to discredit the juniors," Project Superintendent A. E. Booth observed. "It is simply a case where the veterans being older can be more easily directed in what to do and having worked in various occupations before, expect to go on and do a day's work." Booth expressed confidence that the veterans in Company 1351 would be able to bring pre-existing skills to parks, and that in turn, they would be exposed to work in the skilled trades that might benefit them in their life after the CCC.[18]

Despite the skills that enrollees in Company 1351 carried with them to Appomattox Court House, their transfer to the area provoked opposition. The company was directed to move into a campsite which had been vacated by a White company engaged in soil conserva-

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16 Salmond, "The Civilian Conservation Corps," 189.

17 Zenzen, "At the Crossroads," 69; Paige, "The Civilian Conservation Corps," 17.

18 Project Superintendent A. E. Booth, "Report on Activities for Camp NM-4, CCC Co. 1351, for the quarter January 1, 1935 to March 31, 1935," Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. See also "Camp Superintendent's Narrative Report for the quarter of October 1, 1934 to December 31, 1934, CCC Co. 1351, NM-4" and "Report on Activities for Fifth Enrollment Period, Camp NM-4, CCC Co. 1351, for the period April 1, 1935 to September 30, 1935," in Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

tion work, approximately two miles away from the national monument.[19] Acting Superintendent Hubert A. Gurney reported that there was "considerable opposition on the part of the local community" to this decision and formal complaints were filed with the Army by civic groups and concerned citizens. Gurney sought to reassure local residents by orchestrating meetings with the mayor and the board of supervisors and discussed "problems attendant upon the location of the colored camp at Appomattox" with county officials. After introducing local officials to the White company commanders, Gurney reported that he was able to secure the withdrawal of these complaints.[20] Gurney recognized that he would be unable to develop the facilities at Appomattox without the contributions of Company 1351. In 1940, even as this controversy was unfolding, the number of CCC camps was already being curtailed. Company 1351 continued to work on the site until the program was formally brought to a close in 1942.[21]

On the peninsula, the number of African American CCC companies assigned to Colonial National Monument would also steadily be reduced in the late 1930s. But at its peak, five African American companies that enrolled up to 200 men each were stationed there. Company 247 had been quartered at Yorktown but the addition of a fifth camp to the workforce at Colonial National Monument necessitated their relocation to Williamsburg. This company was primarily composed of young men from New York and New Jersey, and was charged, among other things, with facilitating the archeological excavations on Jamestown Island. In their internal reports, NPS supervisors occasionally spoke disparagingly of the character of northern enrollees and expressed a preference for "Virginia Negroes."[22] This sentiment may have colored local reaction to the camp's placement in Williamsburg. Project Superintendent M. A. Acree reported that the outcry surrounding the camp's relocation was so vigorous that "both the Army personnel and the supervising personnel moved in with grave misgivings." The enrollees were aware of this local resentment, Acree noted, and "got the idea that they were not wanted in Williamsburg and they did not want to move there." As NPS project superintendent, Acree worked with company commander Captain MacKie to invite city officials, including Williamsburg's city manager and police sergeant, to a conference at the camp. Afterward, the city manager spoke to the assembled enrollees. Acree recalled that the manager assured them "they *were* welcome here so long as they behaved." With this tepid reassurance, the enrollees continued with their work. In the absence of conflict, Captain

19 Acting Superintendent Hubert A. Gurney, Superintendent's Narrative Report, June 1940, Box 2026, Entry 9, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

20 Acting Superintendent Hubert A. Gurney, Superintendent's Narrative Report, July 1940, Box 2026, Entry 9, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

21 Appomattox Court House National Historical Monument, Annual Reports 1941 and 1942, Box 2026, Entry 9, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

22 W. H. Underwood, Project Superintendent, "Report on Activities for Fifth Enrollment Period, April 1, 1935 to September 30, 1935, Camp NM-3, CCC Co. 2305," Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

MacKie was congratulated by city officials, local residents, and representatives of the College of William and Mary on his "well disciplined" company. Acree reported that tension subsequently dissipated.[23]

For their part, enrollees in Company 247 expressed their own reservations about enlisting in segregated camps run by the military with White supervision from the technical branches. In August 1935, an enrollee from Camp 247 named Luther Wandall published his own account of life in the CCC in *The Crisis*, the official journal of the NAACP. Wandall noted that "During the two years of its previous existence I had heard many conflicting reports concerning the Civilian Conservation Corps, President Roosevelt's pet project. One boy told me that he almost froze to death one night out in Washington. Some said the colored got all the leftovers. Others said that everything was all right. But my brother, who is a World War veteran, advised me emphatically: 'I wouldn't be in anything connected with the Army.' So it was with some apprehension that I surveyed the postal card . . . that I was 'accepted for enrollment.'" At Camp Dix in New Jersey, the segregation of Black and White enrollees was imposed, with African American enrollees asked to "fall out in the rear." Although Wandall was asked to stay on at Dix, he declined to do so because of the poor living conditions African American enrollees experienced there and what he described as a racially repressive atmosphere. In contrast, Wandall reported that Camp Jamestown "was a dream." He observed, "Our bosses are local men, southerners, but on the whole I have found nothing to complain of. The work varies, but is always healthy, outdoor labor. As the saying goes, it's a great life, if only you don't weaken!" Nevertheless, Wandall noted the tension between the camp and the local community, including the local Black population. He wrote, "There are colored people living on farms on all sides of this camp. But they are not very friendly toward CCC boys in general, and toward the northerners in particular. . . . So that, socially, the place is 'beat.'"[24] The camp's tenuous position was also reflected in their newspaper, the *Jamestown Dragon*. Reporter Spaulding Settle noted that many enrollees resented the efforts of local Black ministers Reverend Holland and Reverend Wales, particularly when their sermons focused too sharply on "what is wrong with us." Settle observed that this tension cut both ways, with many of the northern enrollees in the camp regarding "our Southern brothers as inferior to ourselves." Settle urged his compatriots to abandon this perspective and open up communication with the local populace.[25]

As a result of local resistance to the placement of African American camps, Director Fechner established a policy in 1935 which generally restricted the placement of Black CCC camps to their enrollees' states of origin. Fechner also determined that camp sites were to

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23 M. A. Acree, Project Superintendent, "Emergency Conservation Work, Camp NM-5, CCC Co. 247," January 1935, Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

24 Luther C. Wandall, "A Negro in the CCC," *Crisis* (August 1935): 244, 253–54.

25 Spaulding Settle, "Coming Church Programs," *Jamestown Dragon Company 247 News,* 1, no. 1, 30 November 1934, p. 3, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

be approved in advance by a state's governor, and generally the CCC recommended their placement near population centers with higher proportions of Black residents.[26] African American CCC camps were also frequently placed on federally-owned land, and as a result, a disproportionately high number of Black CCC camps were situated within national parks.[27] In Virginia, this meant that African American CCC camps were located in the southeastern portion of the state and in the Tidewater, but not in mountainous areas like the Blue Ridge. A number of CCC camps were assigned to Shenandoah National Park, for example, but they were all White. In contrast, at Colonial National Monument all five of the camps were African American. Over time, the character of these camps shifted in the wake of Fechner's directive. Company 247 would be replaced by Company 2303, which enlisted local men from Hampton Roads.[28] In October 1937, the staff of Company 2303's newspaper welcomed "rookies" from Williamsburg itself and the surrounding vicinity.[29]

Likewise, Company 246 was replaced by Company 2305. NPS Project Superintendent W. H. Underwood oversaw the work of both groups of men in the field. In 1934, he had expressed reservations about the enrollees in Company 246 from New York. "There were many inclined to be 'tough' and 'hard' due wholly to their environment before coming to this section of the country," he asserted. However, with careful supervision, he suggested that the military officers and NPS technical staff had been able to achieve "very marked improvement in mental attitudes." In addition to reporting on the accomplishments of the men in the field, Underwood mused, "It is doubtless irrelevant here to state in passing that a Nubian is a strange interesting semblance of personality. One has to understand their whims and fancies in order to handle them properly. We find it does little or no good to shout or attempt to bull-doze. The foreman can be firm without being harsh, good natured jollying brings better results and produces the sincerely happy attitude for which the race is famous." Underwood's assessment was infused with racist cultural tropes, including his claim that close discipline—including careful supervision of personal habits and social activities—was necessary to produce "good men and willing workers"[30] of "colored juniors from the tenements and alleys of Harlem."[31] In contrast, Underwood implied, much less direction was required with the men

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26 Salmond, "The Civilian Conservation Corps," 92. Robert Fechner to Senator Robert J. Buckley, 4 June 1936, General Correspondence of the Director, Box 700, RG 35, NARA, College Park, MD.

27 Paige, "The Civilian Conservation Corps," 94. See also Allen F. Kifer, "The Negro under the New Deal–1941" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, 1961), 32.

28 Company 247 was moved back to Camp Dix in New Jersey. See "Many Regrets as CCC Camp Leaves Williamsburg, VA," *New Journal and Guide,* 13 July 1935, p. 10; "New CCC Company in Williamsburg Camp," *New Journal and Guide,* 17 August 1935, p. 4.

29 "Will Welcome 'Rookies,'" *Jamestown Excavator,* 2 no. 1, (15 October 1937): 2, Library of Virginia CCC Newspapers.

30 W. H. Underwood, Project Superintendent, "General Report Emergency Conservation Work, Second Enrollment Period, October 1, 1933 to April 1, 1934, Camp NM-3, CCC Co. 246," Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

31 W. H. Underwood, Project Superintendent, "Report on Activities for Fifth Enrollment Period."

of Company 2305. "Company 2305 are colored Virginia boys mainly and present much less of a problem," Underwood maintained. "This policy of retaining colored camps in the corps areas of origin has resulted in a great improvement in administration and general efficiency both in the Army and Emergency Conservation Work organizations."[32] Despite Underwood's endorsement of the change, it is indisputable that these changes in CCC policy greatly reduced the organization's ability to place CCC companies where they were needed rather than where they originated. Moreover, it restricted the field of opportunity for prospective African American enrollees who could not fill any vacancy that might come available, but only those within their own states. Fechner did allow for the transfer of some African American enrollees outside of their state of origin, but this exception was generally only allowed in those areas with low numbers of resident African American enlistments to ensure they would not be assigned to integrated camps.[33]

Organizing Camp Life

After 1935, the majority of African American CCC enrollees serving in Virginia state and national parks were Virginians. Junior enrollees enlisted for six-month terms, but could re-enlist for up to two years. The young men populating the CCC were paid thirty dollars per month; they received five dollars of pay directly and the remainder of their wage was sent home to designated dependents. A Virginia Department of Public Welfare survey conducted between July 1936 and January 1938 found that half the enrollees in the state had either never been employed, or had been unemployed for at least two to six months prior to enlistment.[34] With the exception of veterans' camps, enrollees were initially recruited between ages 18 and 25, and later between ages 17 and 28. However, NPS project superintendents at Colonial National Monument complained that many of the enrollees were well below the age limit.[35] Project reports submitted to Washington illustrated with photographs of boys swamped by uniforms intended for young men, with cuffs and hems rolled up or cut off to accommodate their smaller frames, support these observations (see Figure 4).[36] Local newspapers also

32 W. H. Underwood, Project Superintendent, "Report on Activities for Fifth Enrollment Period."

33 Salmond, "The Civilian Conservation Corps," 189.

34 Byrne, "Civilian Conservation Corps," 23.

35 E. A. Gissy, Project Superintendent, "Report on Activities for Camp NM-1, CCC Co. 352 for the quarter January 1, 1935 to March 31, 1935," Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. The age range was broadened in 1935 to accommodate the rapid expansion of the CCC in 1935. This expansion was not permanent and was followed by steady reductions from 1936 until the end of the program in 1942 (Paige, 11, 21).

36 E. A. Gissy, Project Superintendent, "Report on Activities for Camp NM-1, CCC Co. 352 for the quarter July 1, 1934 to September 30, 1934," Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

commented on the "extreme youth" of the young men enrolled in Company 2303 at Camp Jamestown.[37]

Many of the CCC's promoters maintained that the program would not only help conserve the nation's natural resources but also its young men, who would be invigorated through wholesome exposure to rugged natural environments and camp discipline.[38] However, not all enrollees took to the work in the field or the regimentation of life in camp. An enrollee could be honorably discharged if he secured independent employment, but some deserted before the expiration of their term of service. In January 1935, Project Superintendent E. A. Gissy complained that four of the fifteen new men who had joined Company 352 at Colonial National Monument refused to work soon after their arrival "because they did not like it in camp." The four men abandoned camp on foot, Gissy reported, "preferring to desert and walk home sooner than to go to work."[39]

However, the majority of enrollees stayed in camp, contributing to the development of the parks and participating in camp life. Company 323 at Colonial National Monument was twice awarded the distinction of being recognized as the finest CCC camp in the state, and a runner-up in the competition for finest camp in the Third Corps Area, which included over 180 camps in Pennsylvania, Maryland, DC, and Virginia. Project Superintendent S. M. Woodward Jr. described the organization of camp life in detail in his reports to NPS officials. Within the camp, Black enrollees were physically separated from White officers and White LEMs associated with the company. One of the six barracks was reserved for the White LEMs, and officers were housed in cabins at the front of the camp's quadrangle. Black enrollees dined in a segregated mess hall, separated from the White officer's mess and the White men's mess.[40] Presumably, shower rooms and latrines were also racially segregated.

The typical day in camp began at 6:00 am when enrollees rose and dressed for breakfast. The early hours were also reserved for tidying up the barracks, making beds, and mopping floors, after which the men gathered for work call at 7:50 am The men assembled in formation in the quadrangle in their sections, subsections, and squads. Companies specialized in certain tasks which were overseen by the project superintendent. For its part, Company 323 specialized in transplanting trees along the parkway, but the company at-large was further divided into sections and under the guidance of assigned NPS foremen. Within these sections, foremen relied on sub-section and squad leaders drawn from the ranks of the Black enrollees to supervise and facilitate the completion of specific tasks. Within Company 323, for

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37 "New CCC Camp Begins with Youthful Group," *New Journal and Guide,* 7 September 1935, p. 17.

38 Wirth, *Park, Politics, and the People,* 151–152.

39 E. A. Gissy, Project Superintendent, "Report on Activities for Camp NM-1, CCC Co. 352 for the quarter January 1, 1935 to March 31, 1935," Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

40 S. M. Woodward Jr., Project Superintendent, "Camp Superintendents Narrative Report for Second Enrollment Period, October 1st, 1933 to March 31st, 1934, CCC Co 323, NM-2," Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD; "What a Company!," *Sentinel and Review,* 11 March 1935, CCC Co. 323, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

Figure 4. Young enrollees in Company 352 demonstrated the size of the root ball of a tree they had removed from a lake in the park. This image illustrates the strategies young boys used to adapt adult CCC uniforms for their smaller frames. Project Superintendent E. A. Gissy complained that men assigned to his company were well below the age limit. (E. A. Gissy, project superintendent, "Report on Activities for Camp NM-1, CCC Co. 352 for the quarter July 1, 1934 to September 30, 1934," Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.)

example, some squads of men identified specimen trees for transplanting and dug them out. Others burlapped them and positioned them onto trucks. Project Superintendent Woodward noted that the crew of "specialists" engaged in this task was referred to colloquially as "the bull gang … picked principally for the strength of their backs." Other men transported the specimens to their new positions, still others planted them, and other crews on water trucks maintained the plantings and helped them take root. At work call, the men assembled in the quadrangle within these work crews. Woodward observed that "These formations are most interesting as our Leaders are picked for their value in the field work, and not their military precision." He described his amusement at watching one of the leaders "twist himself into an almost a 'Gordian Knot'" while completing an about-face "in imitation of a windswept scarecrow" and delivering his report to his supervisor. Woodward's characterization of this interaction traded on the caricatures of blackface minstrelsy. He recounted the leader's report

in dialect, "De's all present 'cept 'Pinhead' Jones an' he's absen,'" in his misguided effort to infuse his report with humor at the expense of the men in Company 323.[41]

The number of hours CCC enrollees worked was carefully monitored. Generally, men worked eight hours a day and no more than forty hours a week. If a day of work was lost because of poor weather, crews would be sent into the field on Saturdays to make up for lost time. Otherwise, the company worked in camp on Saturday mornings performing routine maintenance.[42] An hour was generally provided for lunch, but in Company 323 this period was shortened to 30 minutes and the men returned to camp by 3:30 instead of 4:00. Woodward inaugurated this policy after he reported that a longer lunch undermined the morale of the work crews. "An hour for lunch was tried and proved unsatisfactory," he noted, "as the men just played around, got lost in the woods and were completely out of any notion of working after an hours rest." Woodward also found that transporting the men back to camp for lunch in the mess hall was an inefficient use of time, so a "chow truck" brought meals to the men wherever they happened to be working (see Figure 5). When they returned to camp, enrollees were "free to do as they pleased" until retreat formation was called at 5:00 pm, the flag was lowered, and the men gathered in the mess hall for supper. The day officially came to a close when the company commander completed a bed check at 11:00 pm to ensure that all enrollees were present and accounted for.[43]

After the evening meal, enrollees could participate in education courses, organized recreational activities (including intramural sports), or pursue their own interests in the recreation hall or library. The men also enjoyed unregulated free time on Saturday afternoons and Sundays. Some traveled to nearby towns to socialize. *Ye Olde York Times* noted that the "theme song" on weekends was "Let's go to Newport News!" but the paper cautioned enrollees to remember that they still represented the CCC outside of camp. "When a man wears a uniform," Wilton Ball wrote, "he should live up to the standards of the organization which he represents." Ball urged enrollees to maintain a "polite and gentlemanly" manner on their excursions. Camps also hosted dances and other entertainments that drew young people from surrounding communities. Members of Company 2305, for example, invited young women from area high schools, girls' clubs in Newport News, and locals from Yorktown to their Easter Dance in 1936 (see Figure 6). CCC company newspapers are replete with "gossip" and

41 S. M. Woodward Jr., Project Superintendent, "Camp Superintendents Narrative Report for Second Enrollment Period, October 1st, 1933 to March 31st, 1934, CCC Co 323, NM-2," Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

42 Paige, "The Civilian Conservation Corps," 81–82.

43 S. M. Woodward Jr., Project Superintendent, "Camp Superintendents Narrative Report for Second Enrollment Period, October 1st, 1933 to March 31st, 1934.

"scandal" pages which highlighted the romantic relationships and misadventures of men in camp.[44]

Figure 5. African American enrollees in Company 323 preparing to eat lunch delivered by the "chow truck." Jobs in the overhead were also open to African Americans in the mess hall and kitchens. (S.M. Woodward Jr., project superintendent, "Camp Superintendents Narrative Report for Second Enrollment Period, October 1, 1933 to March 31, 1934, CCC Co 323, NM-2," Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.)

44 "Life in the 'Rec.," *The Jamestown Excavator,* 15 October 1937, CCC Co. 2303; "Company Dance," 15 February 1940, *Jamestown Excavator,* CCC Co. 2303; Wilton Ball, Company 323, "Going to Town," *Ye Olde York Times,* 20 March 1936; "Easter Dance Held in 'Rec' of Co. 2305: Local Girls are Guests," *Ye Olde York Times,* 25 April 1936, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA. Paige, "The Civilian Conservation Corps," 81–82.

JAMESTOWN EXCAVATOR February 15, 1940

COMPANY DANCE

VIRGINIA BLUE DEVILS * CAMP JAMESTOWN.

Turn back the clock....October, 1937, Lt. Graef and Lt. Eister were Commanding an' Junior officers of this company, when the Virginia Blue Devils first played at this camp. The sensation of the evening was the singin' of "Mario"by the songtress Mary Watkins, who sang it as no one else could. This year when we were promised a dance and wanted rhythm the Blue Devils orchestra was suggested for "Rhythm is their business and rhythm is what they swing". But wait - on the 21st of February the Blue Devils are to swing at the camp again.

PRE-HOLIDAY DANCE:

Listen U cats and Jittersbugs Feb. 21, the Thythm Making Cats the Jitterbug Jumping Jivers - the one and only Va. Blue Devils will swing from 9 - 12 PM. Its a convention for the Jittersbugs to meet and do a little jiving and all the cats to cutter in alittle swing movement up the same alley.

Figure 6. CCC Companies invited young women from surrounding communities to dances held in camp recreation halls. ("Company Dance," Jamestown Excavator, 15 February 1940, CCC Co. 2303, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.)

Opportunities for Advancement

The uses enrollees made of their free time in the evening hours was subject to considerable debate among administrative officials in the CCC. Some administrators, including Director Fechner, saw the education program as a distraction from the primary purpose of the organization, which was to put men to work on conservation projects. However, others saw the program as a crucial component of the CCC, particularly in relation to developing the capacity of formerly unemployed men to find work outside of the camps.[45] Although some project superintendents reported they tried to assign enrollees to tasks they expressed interest in or demonstrated a particular talent for, not all enrollees saw a future for themselves in the kind of work they were assigned during the day. Company 247 Project Superintendent M. A. Acree reported, "The enrollees of my camp came from New York and New Jersey and were mostly from cities. Practically none of them had ever used an axe or a cross-cut saw in the woods, and they knew nothing of how to 'throw' a tree. Every one of them wanted to work with tools from the very first and not a one wanted to drag brush to the fire to be burned. One of the boys came to me one morning and wanted to be transferred to some gang working outside of the woods because he said there was no future in dragging brush."[46] For an enrollee like this young man, the educational classes and vocational training offered in camp during the evening hours provided an alternative means of acquiring skills during his term of service.

Some camp commanders advised enrollees to take classes like first aid because they viewed these as crucial to the safety of the men in the field. Others insisted that enrollees who were illiterate develop basic skills in reading and writing while in camp.[47] But typically, enrollees enlisted in classes voluntarily. Camp newspapers were published under the supervision of the camp educational adviser, and consequently, editorials and columns continuously sought to encourage enrollees to make the most of the opportunities available in the evening hours. Charles H. Clarke, the educational adviser for Company 352, urged the men at Yorktown to "learn while you earn." Clarke supervised an educational program in camp that reinforced some of the skills the men applied in the field, like truck driving, forestry, and industrial training. NPS technical staff occasionally taught these courses, offered special lectures on related topics, or participated in Instruction-on-the-Job programs which enabled enrollees to work with NPS foremen to plan and organize the jobs their crews had been assigned.[48] But the program also provided training in "mess management" for men who might be interested

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45 Salmond, *The Civilian Conservation Corps,* 51–53; Wirth, *Park, Politics, and the People,* 152–153.

46 M. A. Acree, Project Superintendent, "General Report Emergency Conservation Work, Second Enrollment Period, October 1, 1933 to April 1, 1934, Camp NM-4, CCC Co. 247," Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

47 "C.O. Moves to Eliminate Illiteracy," *The Jamestown Excavator,* 2, no. 2, 26 October 1937, CCC Co. 2303, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

48 "Education at Premium in CCC Camps: Various Companies Announce Improvements in Program," *New Journal and Guide*, 15 February 1936.

into moving into the overhead crew of cooks and stewards who organized meals in camp, as well as a variety of academic subjects, including arithmetic and writing. Enrollees in courses like carpentry, advanced woodwork, and interior decoration frequently worked on projects designed to improve the quality of life for enrollees in their barracks or the recreational hall, but these classes were also intended to help enrollees gain skills which would enable them to "earn a better living" after their term of service. "The classes and teachers are planned for your use," Clarke wrote, but "it is up to you to use them in order to derive the most benefit." Some enrollees preferred to relax in the evening after a full day of arduous labor, but Clarke urged them not to think of the educational program as "just another thing to take the joy out of life, but rather as an opportunity to better yourselves for the job you hope to get when your services in the CCC are ended."[49] The camp newspaper *Ye Olde York Times* reported that eighty percent of enrollees in the company were taking at least one class.[50]

In a state where many Black students were denied formal access to education beyond the eighth grade, the CCC's educational program afforded some men with opportunities that were not available elsewhere. Nationally, the director of CCC camp education reported that fifty-three percent of African American enrollees had only had access to an elementary education.[51] At Yorktown, Hughes A. Robinson, an African American college graduate volunteering in the camps, collected more specific figures and compared the educational background of the men enrolled in Companies 246 and 247 (who were predominantly from New York and New Jersey) and Company 352 (which was comprised primarily of Virginia men). The national statistics generally held true for Companies 246 and 247, with 55 percent and 58 percent of enrollees having access to fewer than eight years of education respectively. But the figure was much higher for Company 352, with 82 percent of enrollees in the Virginia camp having fewer than eight years of education. Five percent of the men in Company 352 had never attended school at all. Robinson observed most of the Virginia men in camp who had attended at least one year of high school were from urban areas in the state, such as Norfolk.[52]

Robinson was one of a small group of African American educators who volunteered their services to demonstrate that they could work with White officers productively within the camps. In 1934, the local Black community in Hampton Roads placed pressure on the CCC to hire qualified African American men to serve as educational advisers within Black CCC camps. In the spring of 1934, Dr. N. F. McNorton wrote CCC Director of Education

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49 Charles H. Clarke, Camp Ed. Advisor, *The Camp Victory Crier,* CCC Co. 352, 1940, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

50 "Revived Program," *Ye Olde York Times,* 25 April 1936, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

51 William Aery, Director of Education Hampton Institute, "The Education of the Negro," *New Journal and Guide,* 16 July 1938.

52 Approximately ninety percent of men in Companies 246 and 247 were from New York and New Jersey, and 85 percent of men in Company 352 were from Virginia. Hughes A. Robinson, "Educational Differences as Great Among Men from Virginia as Among those from North and South," *New Journal and Guide,* 10 February 1934.

C. S. Marsh and appealed to him to hire Robinson in the Yorktown camps. Virginia's African American newspaper of record, the *New Journal and Guide,* reported that White camp commanders at Yorktown also supported this appointment. While working in the camps in a voluntary capacity, Robinson had secured a 2,000-volume library for the use of the "timber troopers." However, the director of education rejected this appeal. "After careful consideration of all phases of the subject," Marsh wrote, "it has been decided to appoint only white advisers in the Civilian Conservation Corps." After learning of this decision, the presidents of Hampton Institute and Virginia State College interceded, recognizing that placement as an adviser was a desirable occupation for their graduates. They noted that educators at Black colleges and universities had not been consulted when the state of Virginia drew up a list of qualified candidates. McNorton released his correspondence with Marsh to the press and decried the director's decision; Marsh had disqualified Robinson not on the basis of his training or experience but "because of his color." The CCC's policy, McNorton suggested, failed to recognize the crucial role Black educators played in the uplift of their own race in the south. "It is inconsistent with the fundamental principles of southern democracy, especially in the South where colored men have been encouraged to serve their own people," he wrote. The *New Journal and Guide* called on interested Black educators to continue to place pressure on the organization and apply for vacancies. The paper also committed itself to facilitating an "organized drive to eliminate this discrimination" (see Figure 7).[53]

In addition to publicizing Marsh's decision, a formal complaint was sent to the White House. Roosevelt directed the US commissioner of education to review the policy and make appropriate adjustments. Shortly thereafter, Robinson was called to Washington for an interview. He met with Dr. Clark Foreman, the Secretary of Interior's Adviser on Negro Affairs, and attended a conference with Assistant Commissioner Dr. George Gant, CCC Educational Adviser for the Third Corps Area Dr. Thomas G. Bennett, and Dr. Marsh. "At the parley," the *New Journal and Guide* reported, Robinson "presented the case of colored advisers in a clear and precise manner and discussed in detail the principles involved." After the meeting, the CCC reversed its position and agreed to appoint Black advisers to African American camps. It called on local Black colleges to draw up lists of qualified candidates.[54]

In August 1934, ten African American advisers were formally assigned to CCC camps and the *New Journal and Guide* chronicled the steady growth of their ranks in the months that followed.[55] Harry Stanback, Charles Brown, and Charles Clarke were assigned to camps in Yorktown; Walter Dabney served Company 2303 at Camp Jamestown. James Spaulding

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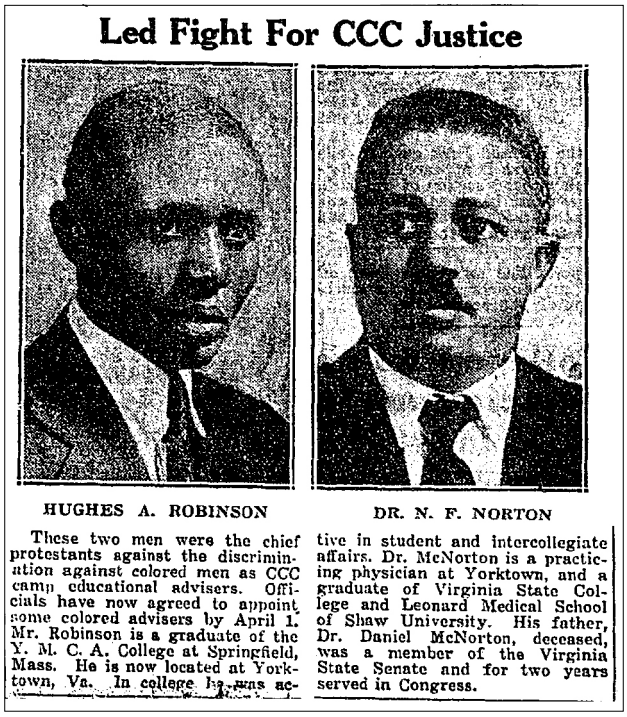
53 "CCC Race Ban Exposed," *New Journal and Guide,* 17 March 1934.

54 "CCC Lifts Ban on Negroes and Camp Advisers," *New Journal and Guide,* 24 March 1934.

55 "Volunteer Trail Blazers for Negro CCC Advisors Reveal New Technique for Breaking Down Barriers," *New Journal and Guide,* 18 August 1934; "Total of Colored CCC Educational Advisors Now 54," *New Journal and Guide*, 30 March 1935; "70 Negro Advisers Added to CCC Edu. Staffs during 1935," *New Journal and Guide,* 22 February 1936; "Twenty-Seven More CCC Educational Advisors Named: Many Hampton Graduates Are in New Group," *New Journal and Guide*, 11 July 1936.



Led Fight For CCC Justice

HUGHES A. ROBINSON

DR. N. F. NORTON

These two men were the chief protestants against the discrimination against colored men as CCC camp educational advisers. Officials have now agreed to appoint some colored advisers by April 1. Mr. Robinson is a graduate of the Y. M. C. A. College at Springfield, Mass. He is now located at Yorktown, Va. In college he was active in student and intercollegiate affairs. Dr. McNorton is a practicing physician at Yorktown, and a graduate of Virginia State College and Leonard Medical School of Shaw University. His father, Dr. Daniel McNorton, deceased, was a member of the Virginia State Senate and for two years served in Congress.

Figure 7. The efforts of Hughes A. Robinson and Dr. N. F. Norton to secure employment for Black educational advisers in African American CCC camps was heavily publicized in the New Journal and Guide. Robinson had been working in a volunteer capacity in the camps at Yorktown. ("Led Fight for CCC Justice," New Journal and Guide, 25 March 1934. Used with permission of the New Journal and Guide, Norfolk, VA.)

worked with African American enrollees at Fort Harrison at Richmond Battlefield, while C. Porterfield Harris organized the educational program for Company 362 at Chancellorsville.[56] Harris was a star pupil at Hampton Institute, having won the college's annual essay contest for his paper on "The New Negro and the New Deal." After graduation, his position in the CCC afforded him with the opportunity to advance the ideals of the New Negro within the context of the Roosevelt administration's work relief program.[57] By July 1938, 162 of 186 educational advisers assigned to African American CCC camps were Black men. The educational programs they oversaw served approximately 25,000 enrollees. They were highly qualified for their positions—all were college graduates, 27 percent held master's degrees, and two percent had earned their PhD. More than half had previous teaching experience (see Figure 8).[58]

Educational advisers worked closely with Works Progress Administration (WPA) teachers in some camps. Harris relied on Dr. Warren Lee Jr., a WPA teacher who was both a

56 "Second Annual CCC Training Conference at Hampton Institute," *New Journal and Guide,* 15 August 1936.

57 "Hampton Debate and Essay Awards Made: C. Porterfield Harris Scores in Both," *New Journal and Guide,* 28 April 1934.

58 William Aery, Director of Education Hampton Institute, "The Education of the Negro," *New Journal and Guide,* 16 July 1938; "CCC Educational Advisors Preparing Youths for Work: Many Hold Master's Degrees, According to H. W. Oxley," *New Journal and Guide,* 19 December 1936.

SECOND ANNUAL CCC TRAINING CONFERENCE ENDS AT HAMPTON INSTITUTE

The second annual training conference of CCC Camp Educational Advisors of the Third Corps Area ended Friday after a two week's session. Dr. Thomas Gordon Bennett, corps advisor, presided over the conference. He was assisted by Dr. C. E. Ward, assistant corps area advisor; and District Advisors Michael Perry, Fred Kelly, John Tignor and James Zulick. Reading from left to right, first row: Robert Duren, Fort Story, Va.; Lorenz Graham, Fort Monroe, Va.; Harry Stanback, Yorktown, Va.; Dr. Thomas Gordon Bennett, Corps Area Advisor; Rushton Long, Furnace Branch, Va.; Joseph Butcher, Austin, Pa.; Charles Brown, Yorktown, Va.; Franklin Peters, Fort Belvoir, Va. Second row: Clarence Grinell, Schnecksville, Pa.; Porterfield Harris, Beaver Springs, Pa.; Harvey Fleshmon, Westfort, Pa.; Booker Smalley, Green Bay, Va.; Charles Clarke, Yorktown, Va.; Theodore Thompson, Emporium, Pa.; Wallace Campbell, Grantville, Pa.; Alexander Williams, Indian Head, Md. Third row: James Childs, Washington, D. C.; Baisal Oliver, Burkesville, Va.; Winston Tyler, Fort George Meade, Md.; James Spaulding, Fort Harrison, Va.; Oscar Pindle, Benezette, Pa.; Walter Ridley, Langley Field, Va.; James Adams, Waverley, Va.; Joel Carter, Kane, Pa.; Walter Soloman, Brandywine, Md. Last row: Rueben Webb, Renova, Pa.; Lorenza Burford, Dillwyn, Va.; Richard Bell, Gettysburg, Pa.; Walter Dabney, Williamsburg, Va.; Richard Boyd, Clover, Va.

Figure 8. Black educational advisers assigned to camps in the Third Corps Area gathered at Hampton Institute annually to coordinate their efforts. ("Second Annual CCC Training Conference Ends at Hampton Institute," New Journal and Guide, 15 August 1936. Used with permission of the New Journal and Guide, Norfolk, VA.)

Fredericksburg native and a graduate of Howard University.[59] Before becoming an educational adviser, Charles Clarke had worked in the camps as a WPA teacher as well. But as the economic prospects of teachers improved in the latter half of the 1930s and the number of available WPA teachers shrank, educational advisers organized classes with the assistance of enrollees. While working at Yorktown, Hughes A. Robinson identified high school graduates he felt were sufficiently qualified to serve as teachers and assistants. This practice continued through subsequent periods of enrollment. For example, in Company 352, enrollee Roland Brummell took over the instruction of two English classes. Brummell was a high school graduate, but his counterpart, William Edlin, who oversaw another English class and taught arithmetic, had only completed elementary school and one year of trade school.[60] CCC Camps at Colonial National Monument sought to address the shortage of qualified teachers by inviting students and graduates of nearby Hampton Institute to teach the enrollees. Initially, the instructors

59 "Dramatics," *The Blowout,* 15 November 1935, CCC Co. 362; "A Tribute," *The Battlefield News,* 3 no. 4, CCC Co. 62, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

60 "WPA Teachers Scarce," *Ye Old York Times*, 20 March 1936; "Enrollees Teach," *Ye Olde York Times,* 25 April 1936, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA; "Face Shortage of Teachers at CCC," *New Journal and Guide*, 7 March 1936.

traveled to the camps, but by February of 1935 more than 100 enrollees were attending class on campus twice a week. Enrollees who participated in the program left Yorktown after dinner to arrive in Hampton by 7:00 pm. After two hours of classes, they returned to camp. Classes were offered in the trade school as well as in the departments of physical education, agriculture, and music.[61]

African American educational advisers in the region also held annual conferences at Hampton to coordinate their activities and display the work produced by enrollees. At these conferences, vocational training was emphasized, particularly in preparation for employment opportunities which had traditionally been open to African American men. In the 1,200 vocational classes offered in Black camps in 1936, special emphasis was placed on "auto-mechanics, chauffeuring, cooking, table work, mess management, personal service, laundering, pressing, shoe repairing, barbering, clerical work, painting, and farming."[62] This approach was in keeping with the model of education promoted by Hampton and Tuskegee, which placed a focus on practical training. As William Aery, director of education at Hampton Institute, noted in his address to the advisers, "Hampton, since 1868, has worked for education for life and dignified labor." CCC educators were encouraged to focus on helping enrollees learn "to do common things uncommonly well."[63] This model was not without its critics. W. E. B. DuBois, for example, argued that African American students should be afforded the same range of educational opportunities as their White counterparts; he promoted a rigorous liberal arts education that would prepare the next generation to lead the charge for civil rights.

In addition to securing Black educational advisers for the camps, civil rights organizations also sought the placement of Black reserve officers in the camp command structure. In the aftermath of the Great War, ROTC units had been established at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) like Howard, Wilberforce University, and Tuskegee Institute. Each year, they graduated reserve officers prepared to answer the call of service. The CCC provided employment opportunity for White reserve officers negatively affected by the Great Depression. In a letter to the editor, Harold Phelps called on representatives of the Black press to demand the same opportunity for their African American counterparts. Phelps noted that active duty in the CCC not only provided immediate employment, but also served as a "kind of school for reserve officers." Phelps observed, "Here, the officer becomes familiar with com-

61 "Timber Troopers Attend Classes at Hampton: Students Aid in Instructing Yorktown Boys," *New Journal and Guide*, 9 February 1935.

62 "CCC Educational Advisors Preparing Youths for Work"; "CCC advisers Hold Training Conference: Leaders Discuss All Phases of Camp Life at Hampton," *New Journal and Guide*, 15 August 1936.

63 "Third Corps CCC Advisors in Second Annual Conference," *New Journal and Guide,* 8 August 1936. In his study of the CCC, John Salmond describes this as "the best practical approach to the problem" of Black unemployment. See Salmond, *The Civilian Conservation Corps,* 101.

pany administration and with the handling of property in a military organization." By denying Black reserve officers these opportunities, the CCC undermined military preparedness.[64]

According to the *New Journal and Guide,* Interior Adviser for Negro Affairs Clark Foreman appealed to the War Department to consider the mobilization of unemployed African American reserve officers as early as 1933, but his suggestion was rejected. The paper noted that African American reserve officers had applied for service, but had been turned down. One applicant who was accepted reported for duty only to be given "one excuse after another" until "he finally was told flatly that he could not be given an assignment." The *New Journal and Guide* noted that African American enrollees labored in camps which were entirely segregated with "the exception of the officers and underlings in charge of their work."[65] The "underlings" in question included NPS technical staff.

In 1935, Dr. Emmett J. Scott, secretary of Howard University, called attention to discrimination in the CCC with particular authority. He had served as the Secretary of War's Special Assistant for Negro Affairs during World War I and written a book, *The American Negro in the World War* (1919), which chronicled the contributions of African American soldiers. Scott's appeal for a change in policy was rebuffed by Secretary of War George H. Dern, who argued that the appointment of Black officers to CCC camps would only increase local White opposition to their presence. CCC Director Fechner seconded this opinion. Although Scott acknowledged that all-Black CCC camps might meet with opposition, he thought it unlikely. "Moreover," he wrote, "it may be said that every single advance made by Negroes in the scale of Americanism and citizenship has been made despite the protests of certain groups more vocal than numerous." Scott insisted that a qualified reserve officer was more interested in the recognition of his rights than concerned that "groups of misguided white people might offend and embarrass him in the exercise of these rights." When Dern refused to change his position, Scott took his appeal directly to President Roosevelt, a former colleague who had served as Assistant Secretary of the Navy during the Great War. After a conference with Scott, Roosevelt directed the CCC to appoint Black doctors and chaplains from the Officers' Reserve Corps to African American CCC camps. In the wake of this decision, the CCC also increased the number of appointed educational advisers.[66] By 1941, twenty-five African American medical

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64 Harold Phelps, Letter to the Editor, "Officers in CCC," *New Journal and Guide*, 15 June 1935. In his memoir, Conrad Wirth, who provided NPS oversight for CCC work in state parks, acknowledged that work in the CCC provided "good training for a large number of army officers, especially in the junior grades up through the rank of major" (Wirth, *Park, Politics, and the People,* 83).

65 "Indians Can Lead Indians but Negroes Incapable of Leading Negroes, CCC Head Intimate," *New Journal and Guide,* 16 December 1933. See also "Unemployed Army Officers Urged for CCC Posts," *New Journal and Guide*, 27 April 1935.

66 "Overrules War Sec'y Geo. H. Dern: Colored Physicians and Chaplains to Be Appointed," *New Journal and Guide,* 3 August 1935; "CCC Discrimination," *New Journal and Guide*, 3 August 1935; "Emmett J. Scott–Diplomat," *New Journal and Guide,* 9 May 1936. See also Salmond, "The Civilian Conservation Corps," 95.

officers and chaplains were on active duty in Black CCC camps with no distinction recognized in rank or pay.[67]

While this was an important breakthrough, it must be noted that the assignments Black officers were permitted to fill in the camps were closely connected to civilian occupations that were also highly segregated. Southern schools were traditionally segregated with White faculty teaching White students and Black teachers teaching Black students. Many White doctors in the South refused to treat Black patients. The Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. once observed that Sunday morning was the most segregated hour of the week. In this respect, the appointment of African American men as educational advisers, medical doctors, and chaplains in African American CCC camps conformed to rather than challenged southern expectations and norms.

Ultimately, no more than ten Black chaplains were appointed to African American CCC camps at any given time. A significant proportion of these men served in Virginia. In 1935, Captain Napoleon Howard Staunton was assigned to Company 352 at Yorktown and worked with the men at Colonial National Monument. Staunton was a World War I veteran with previous experience teaching in the District of Columbia school system (see Figure 9).[68] Like other reserve officers, Stanton was called up for a short period of active duty. He was succeeded by James R.C. Pinn. Pinn occasionally published columns in the camp's newspaper, encouraging the enrollees to view their time in the CCC as an opportunity for self-reflection and self-improvement. "Young men, you who are enjoying the blessings of the CCC which our beloved government has made possible, should examine yourselves daily," Pinn wrote on Easter Sunday 1940. "Is your life better than it was yesterday? Are you building worthy character? Are you striving to be valuable citizens?"[69] William B. Marsh, the chaplain assigned to Company 362 at Chancellorsville launched a more explicit campaign to convert and baptize enrollees through his "Soul Saving Campaign." *The Battlefield News* observed that Marsh urged enrollees to embrace faith as a means of lessening or lightening their burdens.[70] The paper reported that more than one hundred enrollees from the camps Marsh served participated in mass baptism in 1938. The chaplain urged the men in Company 362 to establish relationships with Black churches in Fredericksburg or at home after their terms of service in the CCC.[71]

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67 *The CCC and Colored Youth* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1941).

68 "Ten Negro Army Men Get CCC Jobs," *New Journal and Guide*, 28 September 1935; "Yorktown CCC Camp Has Negro Officer," *New Journal and Guide,* 19 October 1935,

69 "The Chaplain's Easter Message," *The Camp Victory Crier,* CCC Co. 352, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

70 "Ten Negro Army Men Get CCC Jobs," *New Journal and Guide*, 28 September 1935; "Soul Saving Campaign," *The Battlefield New*, 3, no. 1, CCC Co. 362, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

71 "A New Life," *The Battlefield News,* 3, no. 2, CCC Co. 362, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

CCC OFFICERS—Capt. N. Howard Staunton, only Negro officer stationed at the Yorktown CCC Camp. He is a reserve officer of the 428th Infantry and serves as senior chaplain at the York County camp. He was actively engaged in the World War and has traveled extensively. He was caught as he viewed the Hampton-Virginia State football game at Hampton last Saturday. (Journal and Guide Photo).

Figure 9. Captain Napoleon Howard Staunton was one of the first Black reserve officers assigned to active duty in African American CCC camps in the nation. Formally assigned to Company 352, he served all the camps in Yorktown as chaplain. (Published in association with "Efforts to Rescue Stunter Fail . . . Football Gains Momentum . . . Junior College Board . . . Soldier of Fortune," New Journal and Guide, 19 October 1935. Used with permission of the New Journal and Guide, Norfolk, VA.)

Although Black officers advanced into a select number of positions, opportunities for African Americans to advance into administrative positions appointed by the Departments of Interior and Agriculture were limited. In White CCC camps, some of these positions were filled from the ranks of the enrollees.[72] The same was not true in African American CCC camps, even when enrollees demonstrated particular skill or leadership capacity. In October 1934, Project Superintendent Woodward expressed a desire to retain two Black enrollees who

72 In his memoir, Conrad Wirth notes that enrollees that distinguished themselves "were taken on as foremen or LEMs by the supervising technical agencies." Although supervisory personnel were also enrolled for six-month terms, there was no restriction on re-enlistment. Wirth, *Park, Politics, and the People,* 105.

were particularly skilled at operating the machinery used to grade roads in Colonial National Monument. Woodward observed that he would be hard pressed to find a better crew and that it would be impossible to quickly train replacements when their terms of enlistment expired. "Both of the men pictured are local enrollees and it is this type of men that we should be allowed to keep indefinitely, rather than have them subject to discharge," he observed.[73] A few months earlier, Woodward's colleague Project Superintendent Gissy had also expressed his deep regret that the men who had been designated as leaders within his camp would be leaving as a result of ETE.

> I wish to state that we will feel a great loss at the end of June when we will have to part with our leaders, all of whom have been with us from the start. We have not been able to find men of their caliber in any of the subsequent enrollments. They have performed their work seriously, efficiently and intelligently. They have been of the greatest service to us and it was through these men that I could run this camp with four active foremen, releasing the others for detached work. It is my opinion that the CCC camps could be run much more efficiently if the leaders could continue on in the service for they know how the work has to be done and are most valuable to a foreman, enabling him to handle a much larger crew.

Gissy concluded, "In view of the fact that our leaders have worked very hard, I believe it would be a fitting reward for their loyalty, to allow them to re-enlist, and it would most certainly help us to do our work more efficiently."[74] While both project superintendents recognized the value these men brought to the camps and expressed a desire to extend their enlistment, neither proposed bringing them into the permanent technical staff (see Figure 10).

As part of the ongoing discussion about educational advisers and commanding officers in the camps, the NPS was also called on to consider appointing African Americans as project supervisors and foremen. At individual parks, historians, foresters, engineers, and landscape architects could be hired with the approval of NPS administrators who overaw each of these areas of technical specialization. In his administrative history of the CCC and the NPS, John C. Paige discovered that Director Fechner introduced the proposal to hire African American men for these positions at an ECW advisory council meeting, but representatives of the Army and NPS rejected the idea and "further suggested that blacks should always be under white supervision."[75] Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes contested this conclusion. "For my part," Ickes wrote Fechner, "I am quite certain that Negroes can function in supervisory capacities just as efficiently as can white men and I do not think that they should be discriminated against merely on account of their color."[76]

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73 S. M. Woodward Jr., Project Superintendent, "Camp Superintendent's Narrative Report for the Quarter of July 1, 1934 to September 30, 1934, CCC Co. 323, NM-2," Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

74 Eugene A. Gissy, "Report of Activities for Camp NM-1, CCC Co. 352, for the period of October 1, 1933 to March 31, 1934," Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

75 Paige, "The Civilian Conservation Corps," 65–66, 94–95.

76 Harold Ickes to Robert Fechner, 20 September 1935, General Correspondence of the Director, Box 700, RG 35, NARA, College Park, MD and associated reference note, African Americans in the CCC, http://

In 1935, President Roosevelt considered the idea of appointing Black foremen to some positions in the national parks. In a quickly scrawled note to Director Fechner, he encouraged him to "please try put in colored foremen, not of course in technical work but in the ordinary manual work." Rather than implementing this proposal immediately, Fechner forewarned Virginia Senators Carter Glass and Harry Byrd. In the face of their opposition, Roosevelt ultimately rescinded the order.[77] Even if the president's initial proposal had been put into action, the phrasing of his directive implied that there were no qualified candidates for skilled technical work, a position rejected by the Norfolk *New Journal and Guide*. The *Guide* noted that both President Roosevelt and CCC Director Robert Fechner had asserted that "each enrollee will have the opportunity to rise as high as his qualifications will permit," but this principle was not applied to Black enrollees. The *Guide* averred, "There are graduates of various schools of engineering who could qualify as camp [project] superintendents, and

Figure 10. This picture of leaders from Company 352 was submitted by Project Superintendent Gissy with a caption that described these enrollees as the "backbone" of the camp. African American leaders supervised work crews in the field and worked in the camp overhead. (E. A. Gissy, "Report of Activities for Camp NM-1, CCC Co. 352, for the period of October 1, 1933 to March 31, 1934," Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.)

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newdeal.feri.org/aaccc/aaccc06.htm.

77 Franklin D. Roosevelt to Robert Fechner, 27 September 1935, General Correspondence of the Director, Box 700, RG 35, NARA, College Park, MD.

there are more than 3,000 young men between 23 and 29 years old with from three to five years' experience doing every job in the CCC who could be foremen," but these jobs were reserved for White men.[78] The exception to this general rule was at Gettysburg National Park, where the NPS established an all-Black company of African American enrollees, military officers, and technical staff. This camp excelled under the leadership of an African American commanding officer and NPS project superintendent. Four Black engineers and six foremen guided and directed specific work projects, including the NPS's first African American historian, Dr. Louis E. King.[79]

However, in other parks, the opportunities for African American enrollees to move up into technical positions were circumscribed. In Virginia's national parks, project superintendents and foremen were White, but park superintendents also had the discretion to hire skilled workers like mechanics, blacksmiths, machine operators, and the like to facilitate projects.[80] The only reference to enrollees making the transition to this kind of work is found in the pages of Company 2303's newspaper *The Jamestown Excavator*, where three former enrollees are listed as junior facilitating personnel. John Thomas and Courtney Fox are identified as machine operators, and Robert T. Parker as a blacksmith.[81] Parker had distinguished himself as an enrollee while a member of the company, becoming the leader of a barrack. He also had distinguished himself in the educational program. In his role as junior facilitating personnel, the *Excavator* noted, "There is no constructive movement that doesn't get his active support." Parker worked with enrollees to construct bookshelves and medicine cabinets for the camp library and infirmary. He was formally assigned the role of camp blacksmith with a responsibility for mending tools and instructing enrollees interested in learning the trade.[82] However, these positions were only temporary. Six months after his promotion was recognized by the *Excavator,* Parker was no longer listed as an NPS employee. He continued to hold a position of esteem in the camp but he had returned to the ranks of the enrollees. During his second term of service, Parker was elevated to senior leader. The *Excavator* praised his inexhaustable work ethic and his contributions to camp life. "If you look camp over you can see that his efforts have brought results that pay off real value," the paper noted in a special tribute. "Fellows when 'Old Serg' as the boys call him, says 'Lets get

78 "Reorganization Plan of interest to the Race," *New Journal and Guide,* 10 June 1939; *The CCC and Colored Youth* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Offices, 1941).

79 Paige, "The Civilian Conservation Corps," 94–95. See also Rebekah N. Oakes, "Old War, New Deal: Commemorative Landscapes, the NPS, and the 75th Anniversary of the Civil War" (MA Thesis, West Virginia University, 2015), 32–54. Oakes explicitly compares CCC activity in Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park and Gettysburg.

80 Paige, "The Civilian Conservation Corps," 65–66.

81 See staff listing, *Jamestown Excavator,* 9 December 1937, CCC Co. 2303, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

82 "Mr. Parker," *The Jamestown Excavator,* 15 March 1938, CCC Co. 2303, CCC Camp Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

going,' you know it doesn't mean stay."[83] Parker may have been hired as facilitating personnel after his initial term of service expired. Enrollees who left the camps for several months could reapply for enlistment. Parker's reassignment may have been explicitly designed to help carry him over this interval.

Some enrollees must have been frustrated by these limitations. In 1935, Company 323's newspaper, *The Sentinel and Review*, had urged enrollees to develop skills in forestry so they would be prepared to step in to the "ranks of the technical services." The paper noted that the planned expansion of the CCC would open up opportunities for experienced men to work as foremen in new camps, and to pursue subsequent careers in national and state parks. "The men that will get the best breaks, will be the men that are ready to walk into these jobs," the paper prophesied. Service in the CCC was a "fairy tale come true" for enrollees who hoped to get ahead.[84] Unfortunately, the opportunities *The Sentinel and Review* described were not assigned solely on the basis of merit, but on the basis of race. These racial disparities had long-term impacts on the diversity of NPS personnel. As the CCC program came to a close, some men who had been on the payroll of the ECW became permanent employees of the NPS.[85] For the most part, the enrollees who had been afforded the opportunity to take that first step toward a career in the parks were White men.

African American enrollees who saw the CCC as an opportunity for advancement largely distinguished themselves from their peers by becoming recognized leaders and assistant leaders of work crews or barracks, or members of the "overhead." Men in the overhead did not engage directly in conservation work, but instead helped to run the camps themselves by occupying positions as mess stewards, clerks, and managers of post exchanges. These positions were sought after as pathways to secure employment outside of the CCC. More immediately, assistant leaders and leaders received increases in pay, earning $36 and $45 a month respectively.[86] Reporter William Conklin Brown observed that these men effectively served as a second tier of "colored staff" in the camps, working as assistant educational advisers, mess stewards, company clerks, and managers of post exchanges operated for the convenience of the enrollees.[87]

As noted earlier, many project superintendents recognized the indispensable contributions African American leaders made to camp life. In many cases, as with Robert Parker,

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83 "A Salute to Sr. Leader Parker," *The Jamestown Excavator,* 15 February 1940, CCC Co. 2303, CCC Newspapers, Richmond, VA.

84 "Many Good Jobs for Qualified CCC Foresters," *The Sentinel and Review*, 11 March 1935; "CCC Granted New Expansion," *The Sentinel and Review,* 20 March 1935, CCC Co. 323, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

85 Paige, "The Civilian Conservation Corps," 23.

86 "Colored Youths Will Suffer Most if CCC is Abolished," *New Journal and Guide,* 10 January 1942.

87 William Conklin Brown, "Danville, Lawrenceville, Emporia, and CCC Camps Visited by Traveling Guide Reporter," *New Journal and Guide,* 3 August 1935. See also Edgar G. Brown, "The CCC and Colored Youth of the Nation," *New Journal and Guide,* 27 April 1935.

they also earned the respect of their peers. Camp newspapers occasionally profiled company leaders, highlighting their commitment to self-improvement. The unique talents of some men were recognized right away. For example, *Ye Olde York Times* featured George Thomson and his rise through the ranks of Company 352. Thompson was a native of Richmond and a high school graduate. Unable to afford college, he worked as a chauffeur and cook before joining the CCC. Like all enrollees, Thomson took an entrance exam when he arrived in camp. His high score on the arithmetic portion recommended him for the position of exchange steward in the overhead. Since Thomson could type, he was also asked to work as an assistant clerk and ultimately ascended to chief clerk. In his spare time, Thomson also taught classes in the education program.[88] The path of other enrollees was more torturous. At Camp Chancellorsville, Norman Webb was described by *The Blow Out* as a man well-qualified to hold a position in the overhead, but he had been assigned to work in the field transplanting trees. "The zeal of ambition which was a burning flame inside of him kept his thoughts on advancing upward to the rank of leader," the paper reported, but his desires were not immediately realized. Instead, Webb found himself the assistant to an assistant leader. Still, he sought opportunities for advancement on the weekends by observing the work in the camp supply room (see Figure 11). Finally, his initiative was recognized when he was asked to fill a vacancy as the supply clerk. The paper celebrated Webb's tenacity and cautioned other enrollees: "If you think you are beaten, you are; if you think you dare not, you don't; if you think you can win but won't try, its [sic] always certain you won't."[89]

Clerical staff, and men who worked in the mess hall and kitchens, were sent to specialized training schools. By gaining new skills they enhanced their own long-term employment prospects, but also received training which benefitted the entire camp. This was particularly remarked on in relation to company cooks.[90] Clerical staff received training in "handling mail, stenography, typing, letter writing, military correspondence, drafting letters, letter writing, filing and indexing, records, reports, CCC organization and administration, office routine, and care and use of office equipment."[91] These skills translated readily into other contexts. George Thomson's predecessor as chief clerk for Company 352, for example, found employment with the Federal Housing Administration.[92] These opportunities for men in the overhead were viewed as an extension of the practical vocational training offered by CCC educational pro-

88 "Who's Who," *Ye Olde York Times*, 25 April 1936, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

89 Elmer R. Shelton, "Norman Webb," *The Blow Out,* 15 November 1935, CCC Co. 362, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

90 "Mess Steward and Cooks Attend Cooks' and Bakers' School," *The Battlefield News,* vol 3.2, CCC Co. 362; "Mess Officer Returns," *Jamestown Excavator,* 15 April 1938, CCC Co. 2303; "Cooking and Table Waiting Class," *The Camp Victory Crier,* 1940, CCC Co. 352, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

91 "Asst' Clerk and Training School, "*The Jamestown Excavator,* 30 November 1938, CCC Co. 2303, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

92 "Company Notes," *Ye Olde York Times,* 20 March 1936, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

Figure 11. This hand-drawn cartoon of the supply room features two enrollees of vastly different height wearing ill-fitting uniforms. The position of supply clerk was actively sought after by men like Norman Webb. (Published in The Jamestown Excavator, 26 October 1937, CCC Co. 2303, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.)

grams more broadly.[93] By the late 1930s, camps adopted formal job placement programs and educational advisers developed lists of "preferred" enrollees for prospective employers. Men who had secured positions in the overhead or as leaders for work crews in the field advanced to the top of this list.[94]

Contributions to Park Development

Work crews organized under leaders and assistant leaders made innumerable contributions to the development of the national parks in the state of Virginia. For example, at Colonial National Monument, African American CCC companies reshaped the landscape. They created the truck trails that provided access to the farthest reaches of the park and even dug

93 C. Porterfield Harris, "Practical Education," *The Battlefield News*, vol. 4.3, CCC Co. 362, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

94 "A Job Placement Program," *Ye Olde York Times*, 20 March 1936, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

the marl that was used to pave them (see Figure 12).[95] They also completed fine grading on the entirety of the Colonial National Parkway, largely by hand. The CCC was a work relief program, so most jobs were completed with the most rudimentary tools and manual labor; using labor-saving machinery was beside the point.[96] As noted earlier, Company 323 transplanted specimen trees along the parkway according to the specifications of landscape architects who carefully crafted scenic vistas for the pleasure of motorists.[97] By 1935, Project Superintendent Woodward reported that the company's efforts were evident in the proliferation of blooming dogwoods and redbuds along the drive. "Everyone who uses this portion of the Parkway has been unstinting in praise of its loveliness and as its reputation spreads, more and more people have been drawn down to see it," he commented.[98] Enrollees in the company took pride in their work and their mastery of the principles of forest management. Enrollee Kenneth L. Wilson published a "work poem" in *The Sentinel and Review* that captured this spirit: "Boys! Boys! Spare that tree! 'We will,' said the boys of the CCC. 'It is not complicated,' we might say. 'We conserve in a scientific way.'"

Other scenic improvements were made as well. Company 352 took primary charge of removing dead wood from lakes and other water ways. Work crews also strove to minimize fire hazards by removing dead trees in the forest stands, and repurposing the fallen trees as lumber for buildings in camp and throughout the park area (see Figure 13).[99] Company 2305, one of only a handful of Navy camps, developed a specialization in erosion control, dramatically reshaping the banks of the York and James Rivers which butted up against park property. Again, this work was principally done by hand (see Figure 14). Other members of this company tried to reduce the threat of malarial mosquitoes by digging trenches designed to encourage the movement of stagnant water and spraying foliage with chemicals. CCC enrollees appreciated their efforts, having intimate experience with the mosquitoes, chiggers, ticks,

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95 M. A. Acree, Project Superintendent, "Emergency Conservation Work, Camp NM-4, CCC Co. 247, Narrative Report, July, August, and September" 1934; E. A. Gissy, Project Superintendent, "Report on Activities for Camp NM-1, CCC Co. 352, for the quarter January 1, 1935 to March 31, 1935," Box 31, Entry 96, RG, 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

96 S. M. Woodward Jr., Project Superintendent, "CCC. Co. 323, NM-2, Colonial Nat'l Mon., Yorktown, VA, Sup'ts' Narrative Report for Fifth Enrollment Period," October 1935, Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

97 Historian David Louter coined the term "windshield wilderness" to describe an approach to park development popularized during the Progressive Era which sought to make parks more accessible to automobiles and motorists, to democratize and popularize the experience of touring the parks. Louter argues that conservationists who promoted "roadless" parks and the passage of the Wilderness Act (1964) did so, in part, as a response "to what they saw as the Park Service's overdevelopment of parks during the work relief programs of the 1930s." See David Louter, *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington's National Parks* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), 6–7.

98 S. M. Woodward Jr., Project Superintendent, "CCC. Co. 323, NM-2, Colonial Nat'l Mon., Yorktown, VA, Sup'ts' Narrative Report for Fifth Enrollment Period," October 1935, Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

99 E. A. Gissy, Project Superintendent, "Report of Activities for Camp NM-1, CCC Co. 352, for the period of Oct. 1, 1933 to Mar. 31, 1934," Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

Figure 12. Enrollees in Company 352 excavating marl by hand. This marl was distributed on truck trails throughout Colonial National Monument. (E. A. Gissy, project superintendent, "Report on Activities for Camp NM-1, CCC Co. 352, for the quarter January 1, 1935 to March 31, 1935," Box 31, Entry 96, RG, 79, NARA, College Park, MD.)

and flies that could torment men in camp and in the field. "There's nothing that the world has made like a shotgun or torpedo, for dealing with the Jamestown Isle's variety of mosquito," one enrollee quipped. This crew did similar work not only in Colonial but also at Guilford Court House Military Park in North Carolina, at Petersburg and Richmond Battlefield Parks, George Washington Birthplace, and Fredericksburg National Cemetery.[100]

Enrollees also helped to uncover, reconstruct, and preserve the history of the colonial experience at Yorktown and Jamestown. The men appeared to be particularly invested in this kind of work. Company 247 participated in early archeological investigations at Yorktown until they were transferred to Camp Jamestown to do similar work at the other end of the monument. As noted earlier, project superintendents and foremen had occasionally disparaged the work ethic of men in this company, but the work reports from the archeological excavations

100 "History of Company 2305" and "Did You Know," *Ship Ahoy,* 10 February 1936, CCC Co. 2305; "A Poem," *Jamestown Excavator*, 26 August 1938, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA; W. H. Underwood, Project Superintendent, "Report on Activities for Fifth Enrollment Period."

MONUMENT
ELD AREA
Gloucester Point
PROJ. NO. 1014 SALVAGE BRITISH NAVAL RELICS
PROJ. NO. 712 PUBLIC PICNIC GROUND MAINT.
PROJ. NO. 701 BEACH IMPROVEMENT
PROJ. NO. 110 REPAIRING OF WINDMILL POINT HOUSE
YORKTOWN
PROJ. NO. 712 PUBLIC PICNIC GROUND MAINT.
PROJ. NO. 605 FIRE HAZARD REDUCTION
PROJ. NO. 715 SEEDING AND SODDING MAINT.
Goosley
Tract
PROJ. NO. 1012 PREPARING AND TRANSPORTING MATERIAL

Figure 13. Maps submitted with quarterly reports reveal the scope of individual company's contributions to the park landscape. This map highlighted the work of Company 352, which ranged from salvaging relics from a British man-of-war sunk in the York River to fire hazard reduction and public picnic ground maintenance. (Progress Map, Camp NM-1, Yorktown, VA, Fifth Period, April–September 30, 1935, Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.)

were much different. Superintendent Acree described the work as "slow, painstaking, and tedious," yet he was gratified to "see the interest that the men take in the project." Eight men in the company helped process artifacts in the laboratory, cleaning, sorting, counting, and mending pottery shards. Acree reported that these men displayed "remarkable quickness in grasping the methods and applying them," and were so absorbed in their work that they almost missed dinner call. Archeological Foreman Walter Flickinger also commended the men on their growing familiarity with the material culture associated with seventeenth century Virginia (see Figure 15).[101] Similarly, at Yorktown, Senior Foreman Farthing supervised thirty to forty men engaged in field excavation. He praised the skill of veterans from Company 1351, particularly their ability to identify post holes and fence lines by carefully observing the

101 M. A. Acree, Project Superintendent, "Emergency Conservation Work, Camp NM-4, CCC Co. 247, Narrative Report, July, August, and September" 1934; "Emergency Conservation Work, Camp NM-5, CCC Co. 247," January 1935, Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

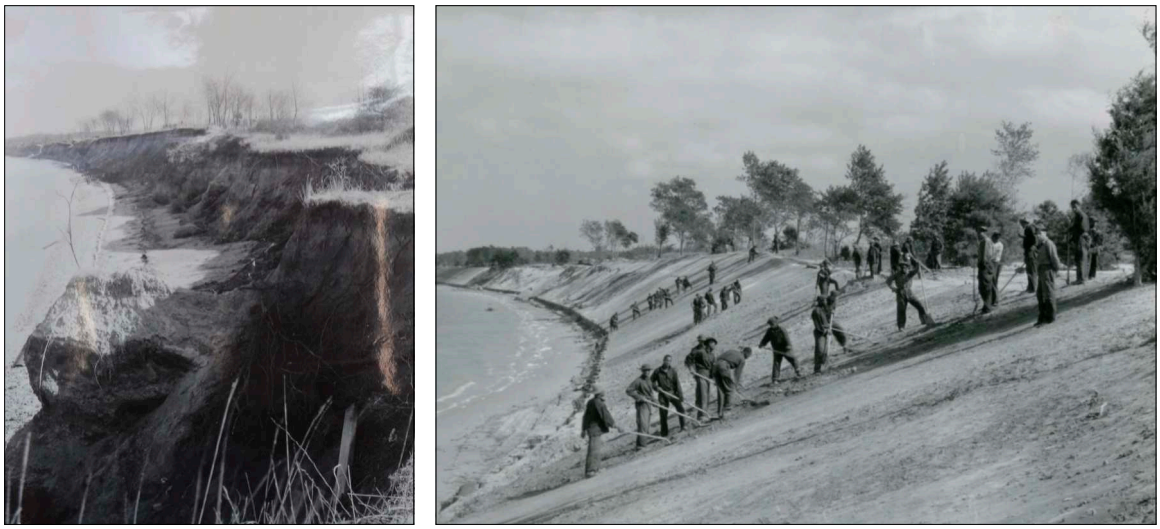

Figure 14. Before and after pictures were frequently submitted with quarterly reports to demonstrate the efficacy of the CCC. These images demonstrate the dramatic impact of Company 2305's efforts to control erosion at Colonial National Monument. (W. H. Underwood, project superintendent, "Report on Activities for Fifth Enrollment Period, April 1, 1935 to September 30, 1935, Camp NM-3, CCC Co. 2305," Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.)

Figure 15. Enrollees in Company 247 working in the archeology lab at Jamestown. Both their project superintendent and foreman commented on the deep engagement and skill of the men involved in this work. (Image courtesy of Colonial National Historical Park, archaeology lab workers from ECW Camp NM-5, Narrative Report for Fifth Period, 1935, COLO 2.)

changing shades of soil.[102] Enrollee Lewis noted that people often asked him questions about the nature of the work he was doing. "We tell them, rather glibly, 'Archeology is the science of the study of relics and remains of an older age,'" he said. "But while we tell them this we should also tell them that we are making history."[103]

Through their collective efforts, CCC enrollees made significant contributions to the archeological collections of Colonial National Monument. In addition to the ongoing excavations, Company 352 participated in a salvage operation which recovered materials from a British man-of-war sunk in the York River. Project Superintendent Gissy described the excellent preservation of many of the metal, wood, and leather artifacts and asserted that the "priceless relics" recovered would "add untold value to the museum collection."[104] Skilled carpenters in Company 1351 built exhibit cases to house these artifacts and display them in a replica of the captain's quarters.[105]

In addition to the display at Yorktown, enrollees in Company 2303 helped to construct and build a new museum facility at Jamestown which opened to visitors in 1938. The *Jamestown Excavator* reported that visitors were encouraged to observe the enrollees at work in the laboratory associated with the facility. "After the tourist[s] have gone through the museum itself, they are directed by signs to the laboratories, where they are allowed to look through the windows and see what is going on inside," the paper noted. "At present the chief attraction is enrollee Alton Burke, who is doing all sorts of work there from washing the artifacts which are brought in from the excavations, to putting together pottery which has been found." Visitors were also invited to observe the excavations in progress, and could watch Assistant Leader Odell Price and his crew as they were "busily engaged in looking for the remains of one of the houses of Old Jamestown."[106] Like his predecessors in Company 247, enrollee William Henry described his work on the excavations as his "most interesting" experience in the CCC (see Figure 16).[107]

CCC enrollees helped to construct other facilities for visitors in the park as well, including educational contact stations.[108] They also maintained picnic areas and other public

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102 A. E. Booth, Project Superintendent, "Report on Activities for Camp NM-4, CCC Co. 1351, for the quarter January 1, 1935 to March 31, 1935," Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

103 Lewis, "On the Island," *Jamestown Dragon*, 30 November 1934, CCC Co. 247, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

104 E. A. Gissy, Project Superintendent, "Report of Activities for Camp NM-1, CCC Co. 352, for the quarter October 1, 1934 to December 31, 1934," Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

105 A. E. Booth, Project Superintendent, "Report on Activities for Camp NM-4, CCC Co. 1351, for the quarter January 1, 1935 to March 31, 1935," Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

106 "Museum Opens," *Jamestown Excavator,* 16 June 1938, CCC Co. 2303, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

107 William Henry, "My CCC Experience," *Jamestown Excavator,* 26 October 1936, CCC Co. 2303, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

108 E. A. Gissy, Project Superintendent, "Report of Activities for Camp NM-1, CCC Co. 352, for the quarter July 1, 1934 to September 30, 1934," Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

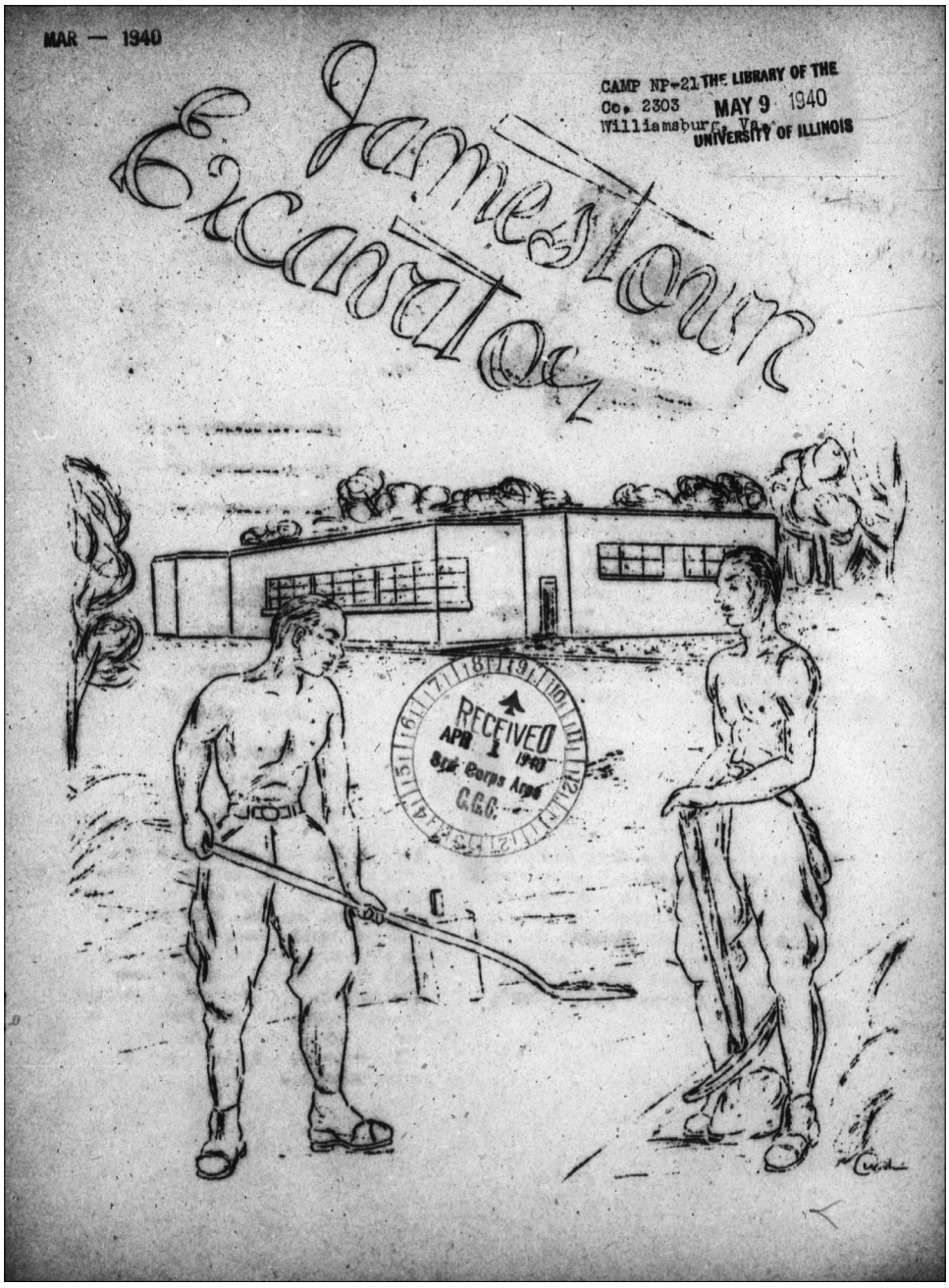

Figure 16. Line drawing of the museum opened at Jamestown in 1938. As The Jamestown Excavator noted, enrollees at work in the laboratory and the field were a "chief attraction" for visitors. Historian Bryant Simon has noted that promotional material for the CCC typically featured "portraits of male bodies."* (Front cover, Jamestown Excavator, March 1940, CCC Co. 2303, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.)

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* Bryant Smith, "'New Men in Body and Soul': The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Transformation of Male Bodies and the Body Politic," in *Gender and the Southern Body Politic* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000): 131–161.

grounds without direct supervision from NPS foremen. Project Superintendent Gissy noted that the grounds maintenance crew was "supervised by a very able and trustworthy colored leader" and often worked in close proximity to the public.[109] However, although enrollees were clearly visible to visitors within the park, they were discouraged from having direct contact with them. Before 1935, the small number of White LEMs who were associated with the Black companies at Colonial National Monument provided basic visitor services under the guidance of the chief ranger. When Director Fechner ordered the stricter segregation of the camps, White LEMs assigned to Colonial left the park. Rather than reassigning Black enrollees to these tasks, education and contact station work was abandoned all together.[110] The presumption that Black enrollees could not do this work also informed Superintendent Branch Spaulding's appeal to his superiors to close the Black CCC camp at Chancellorsville rather than its White counterpart in the late 1930s. Black enrollees could not be positioned as authorities on the history of the battlefields, Spaulding argued, because their presence as guides would provoke an "unfavorable public reaction."[111]

Moreover, while African American enrollees enjoyed a diverse array of recreational activities in their free time, it is also evident that they were not encouraged to tour the parks they worked in at their leisure. When the men did tour the parks, these outings were carefully orchestrated by NPS officials. For example, enrollees in Company 362 were taken on a tour of the battlefields in Fredericksburg in February 1939. This was hardly peak season for the park, and when this outing occurred, the company had already been actively working at Chancellorsville for four years. The *Battlefield News* noted that the tour gave the men "a chance to get first-hand information about the battles that were fought here during the Civil War," an opportunity that was not available to them otherwise.[112] Likewise, although enrollees working on archeological excavations at Jamestown worked within eyesight of the property controlled by the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA) on the island, they clearly did not stroll the grounds as a matter of course. In June 1938, *The Jamestown Excavator* reported that a group of enrollees in Company 2303 visited the APVA grounds "to take pictures and see what it was all about." The enrollees were also afforded with the opportunity to visit the new museum within the national park that members of their company had helped to construct. The paper noted that at least three enrollees had visited the island for a "sightseeing trip" before the outing. Since their camp was in Williamsburg, this necessitated

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109 E. A. Gissy, Project Superintendent, "Report on Activities for Camp NM-1, CCC Co. 352, for the Fifth Enrollment Period, April 1, 1935 to September 30, 1935," Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

110 S. M. Woodward Jr., Project Superintendent, "CCC. Co. 323, NM-2, Colonial Nat'l Mon., Yorktown, VA, Sup'ts' Narrative Report for Fifth Enrollment Period," October 1935; E.A. Gissy, Project Superintendent, "Report on Activities for Camp NM-1, CCC Co. 352, for the Fifth Enrollment Period, April 1, 1935 to September 30, 1935"; M. A. Acree, Project Superintendent, Narrative Report for Camp NM-5, CCC Co. 247, October 1935, Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

111 Zenzen, "At the Crossroads," 83.

112 "Company Takes Historical Trip to Battlefields," *Battlefield News*, vol 3.5, CCC Co. 362, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

renting bicycles and pedaling to Jamestown.[113] The camp swimming group also swam in the James River in the park under the supervision of a lifeguard, but the site of their activities was described as the "Camp Beach," not a publicly accessible facility.[114]

Conclusion

African American enrollees in Virginia's national parks made an indelible impact on the landscapes they left behind. In operation since 1933, the CCC formally came to a close in 1942 after experiencing several years of steady reductions.[115] In 1938, Director Fechner released letters from civil rights leaders who praised the program for "salvaging" a generation of young African American men who had been most vulnerable to the ravages of the Great Depression. Although the *New Journal and Guide* had been one of the CCC's most persistent critics by highlighting evidence of racial disparities in the camps, Editor P. B. Young credited the CCC for the opportunities it had provided to the more than 250,000 African American juniors and 30,000 veterans who had joined its ranks. "More than ordinarily disadvantaged by race and color they have been helped over a period when their exposure to these disadvantages threatened to subject them to complete social disintegration," he wrote.[116] Other observers noted that CCC alumni came away from the program with new vocational skills, as well as a new sense of confidence. Captain G. Lakes Imes, a Black chaplain who served in the camps, contended that enrollees who experienced life in the CCC emerged with a different outlook. "They have a new attitude toward life, a new sense of responsibility, a new sense of capability, and more than all perhaps a new sense of 'belonging.'" Imes suggested that this sense of belonging was particularly important for young Black men who had traditionally been excluded from many of the benefits of American citizenship.[117]

Yet, despite the important economic support the CCC provided for enrollees and their designated dependents, opportunities for advancement were not distributed equally between White and Black companies. The CCC had only reluctantly appointed Black educational advisers and military reserve officers to positions of authority. With the exception of

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113 "Enrollees Sightsee at Jamestown," *Jamestown Excavator,* 16 June 1938, CCC Co. 2303, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

114 "Recreation," *Jamestown Excavator,* 26 August 1938, CCC Co. 2303, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

115 The Virginia congressional delegation, led by Senator Harry Byrd, played a crucial role in bringing the CCC to an end. Byrd chaired to the Joint Committee for the Reduction of Nonessential Federal Expenditures and recommended its elimination. *Newsweek* reported Byrd's critics accused him of "using the war to kill New Deal legislation he previously had been unable to touch" (Byrne, "Civilian Conservation Corps," 73–78).

116 "Salving of Race Youth by CCC Highly Praised: Noted Leaders Sent Letters to Fechner," *New Journal and Guide*, 16 April 1938.

117 Captain G. Lakes Imes, "CCC Camps Have Been a Godsend to 12,000 Youths of South," *New Journal and Guide*, 1 April 1936.

Camp 1355 in Gettysburg National Park, positions as project superintendents and foremen had been reserved for White men. With the end of the CCC, African American workers found no place for themselves in the NPS. In 1942, the newly established Fair Employment Practices Committee surveyed the Department of Interior's workforce and found that only 1.6 percent of its employees were African American. In Virginia's national parks, there were no African American employees at most parks, including Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park and Appomattox Court House National Monument, which had hosted Black CCC camps. At Colonial National Historical Park, where thousands of enrollees had helped to reshape the landscape over the course of nearly a decade, only six African American men continued to work in the park as unskilled day laborers compensated at two or four dollars per day.[118]

Moreover, the ability of former enrollees to return as visitors to the parks they had helped to build would continue to be shaped by the constraints of segregation after their departure from the camps. Many of the visitor facilities CCC workers had helped to create, including campgrounds, picnic areas, and comfort stations, were segregated by race in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Ironically, the extra cost associated with creating duplicative facilities in the parks had been born, in part, by the extra funds directed toward their development as a result of emergency conservation work. However, as the CCC was disbanded, a separate but unequal landscape was revealed. In many parks, superintendents had prioritized the development of facilities for White visitors. With funds that had been earmarked for park development redirected toward the needs of a nation at war,[119] the NPS was forced to confront how it would address this problem.

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118 Lawrence W. Cramer, Executive Secretary President's Committee on Fair Employment Practices, to Secretary Harold Ickes, 22 August 1942; Acting Superintendent J.C. Harrington, Colonial National Park, to NPS Director, 1 December 1942; Coordinating Superintendent Edward Hummel, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, to NPS Director, 1 December 1942; Superintendent Hubert A. Gurney, Number of Permanent Negro Employees as of November 30, 1942, 1 December 1942, Box 254, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

119 Wirth, *Park, Politics, and the People*, 20; Paige, "The Civilian Conservation Corps," 32.

CHAPTER THREE

Landscape of Segregation

As the CCC built and constructed facilities for visitors in the 1930s, a landscape of segregation emerged in Virginia's national parks. The development of parking lots, picnic areas, foot trails, comfort stations, campgrounds, and cabins contributed to the institutionalization of segregation in these areas, and reinforced the informal practices of racial separation which had been practiced in the parks even when only the most rudimentary facilities were available. NPS administrators and CCC camp superintendents often prioritized the development of facilities for White visitors, and as a result, those planned for African American use were frequently underdeveloped or completely unrealized. The facilities available for White visitors in Virginia's national parks were more numerous, varied, and evenly distributed across the landscape. Sites for African American recreation were frequently screened from other locations, and even were deliberately situated on separate watersheds or with separate points of entry from those developed for White visitors. In some cases, park planners deliberately discouraged pre-existing African American use of recreational areas within the parks by refusing to provide facilities at those sites.

The planning decisions made in the 1930s continue to shape the landscapes of the state's national parks today. But in many ways, the landscape of segregation in these parks is a hidden history. In the late 1930s, the NPS and Department of Interior decided to remove racial designations from park maps and literature, and to minimize segregation signs, to make segregation less visible in the parks, but this decision did not coincide with the desegregation of those facilities. Areas designated for the use of White and Black travelers continued to be separated, even when they were not clearly marked. Instead, travelers were directed to segregated spaces through informal conversations with park rangers. Moreover, NPS planners also removed racial designations from many planning documents even as they created duplicative facilities. Consequently, unearthing this history requires close and careful study not only of maps, brochures, blueprints, and the like, but the correspondence surrounding these documents.

The practice of segregation in Virginia's national parks and RDAs during the 1930s was pervasive, if not entirely uniform. The development of NPS facilities and the services provided by concessionaires differed from park to park. However, even before many permanent facilities for visitors were constructed, segregation was practiced and enforced in these spaces by restricting Black travelers to specific parts of existing grounds. For example, while Shenandoah National Park was under development, segregation was enforced through infor-

mal interactions with CCC workers and park rangers. In September 1936, African American motorist H. A. Harris visited the park with a group of eight people. After passing two picnic areas, they stopped at a third. Harris and his party found an unused table, but shortly after settling down to eat, he reported that a "young man dressed in a CCC uniform came to me and informed us that we could not have our lunch there." The White CCC enrollee informed Harris that another part of the park had been designated for the use of Black travelers. After this fraught encounter, Harris wrote Shenandoah Superintendent J.R. Lassiter to inquire about the park's rules as he was "satisfied there must have been some mistake on the part of the young CCC worker."[1] In reply, the superintendent corrected this misconception, and informed Harris that the park planned to formalize the practice of racial segregation even further by building separate facilities which would be clearly marked for the use of Black tourists.[2]

The lack of clarity about the NPS's policy resulted in a more explosive conflict at the South River Picnic Grounds in September 1937. As Acting Superintendent Theodore Smith later recalled, a group of African American congregants from a church in Washington, DC, "appropriated a large portion of the area to use." White picnickers asked a park ranger to intercede, and when he instructed the group to restrict their gathering to a small part of the picnic ground on the other side of the driveway, Smith reported that "they became highly incensed" and the ranger feared that "real violence" might result. The ranger appealed to the group to "abide by the practice and policies that generally obtained in Virginia" and suggested that if the conflict escalated, it would inevitably reflect poorly on the Black visitors rather than the NPS. In response, members of the group "repeatedly stated … that racial segregation was not a policy in the national parks." The district ranger insisted that the group move and replied that "no precedent had been established in the matter of segregation in National Parks" since parks within the southern states had only been recently established.[3]

For these visitors and others, it was unclear whether segregation was an official NPS policy or was being practiced on the ground by local staff. After a visit to Shenandoah in 1936, L. E. Wilson wrote a letter to NPS Director Arno B. Cammerer protesting the existence of segregated comfort stations in the park and asking precisely this question. "I am writing to find out whether it is your policy to establish such separation or whether this has been done without your knowledge," Wilson queried.[4] He must have been disappointed to receive a response from Acting Director A. E. Demaray which confirmed that the NPS planned to create separate visitor facilities for White and Black visitors in order to "conform with the

1 H. A. Harris to Superintendent Lassiter, 16 September 1936, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

2 Lassiter to Harris, 19 September 1936, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

3 Theodore T. Smith, Acting Superintendent, to Director NPS, 28 February 28 1940, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

4 L. E. Wilson to Arno B. Cammerer, 19 September 1936; L.E. Wilson to Harold Ickes, 19 September 1936, Box 1650, Entry 10.2 RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

generally accepted customs long established in Virginia." Demaray suggested that racial separation would not impede, but in fact would enhance, "the complete enjoyment of the park equally by all alike." He wrote, "To render the most satisfactory services to white and colored visitors, it is generally recognized that separate rest rooms, cabin colonies and picnic ground facilities should be provided." Demaray assured Wilson that the facilities provided would be equal, and consequently, that segregation should not be interpreted as a signal that the NPS drew invidious distinctions between racial groups.[5] In a review of NPS responses to letters of complaint by the Department of Interior in 1939, Assistant Solicitor Phineas Indritz would later characterize Demaray's response to Wilson as "incomprehensible," "evasive," and "an insult to the intelligence of the inquirer."[6]

Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes initially supported the NPS's policy of segregation in the southern states, although he would later place pressure on park officials to unravel the separate and unequal landscape it created. In 1937, Walter White, the Executive Secretary of the NAACP, wrote to inquire if newspaper accounts, "which indicate the establishment of a jim-crow project on Federal territory, are correct." The civil rights leader was familiar with Ickes because of his previous association with the NAACP in Chicago, and was certain that the secretary would "vigorously oppose" the imposition of the color line in the national parks. However, White noted, "If it be true that the establishment of such segregated colonies is being contemplated, we wish to go on record as most vigorously protesting against the inauguration of such a policy."[7] In reply, Ickes acknowledged White's letter, but confirmed that Department of Interior planned to construct "recreational areas for both white and colored people in conformity with the customs of the State in which the park is located."[8] Indeed, this rule informed the planning, development and construction of visitor facilities in all the national parks established in Virginia in the years before World War II. The full range of visitor facilities—pit toilets, comfort stations, laundry rooms, picnic areas, campgrounds, dining and lodging, as well as recreational areas like foot trails, playgrounds, and beaches—were segregated in accordance with local law and custom.

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5 Demaray to Wilson, 18 September 1936, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. See also Terence Young, "'A Contradiction in Democratic Government': W. J. Trent, Jr., and the Struggle to Desegregate National Park Campgrounds," *Environmental History* 14 (October 2009): 655–656.

6 Indritz to Margold, 12 January 1939, marked 1st draft, unsatisfactory to Secretary, rewritten, Box 8, Entry 810, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

7 Walter White, Executive Secretary of NAACP, to Harold Ickes, 21 January 1937, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

8 Ickes to White, 4 February 1937, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. See also Young, "A Contradiction in Democratic Government," 656-657.

Local Custom: Virginia State Parks

As noted in chapter one, in addition to constructing national parks in Virginia during the 1930s, the NPS also provided planning assistance and technical supervision over the CCC camps that helped to construct the first six state parks in Virginia. As the NPS facilitated state planning and engaged in its own work, the intention of both NPS Director Arno B. Cammerer and Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes was to develop parks in "conformity with the customs of the State." What were these customs? And to what degree were they replicated in national parks? The early state park system in Virginia was segregated through the practice of racial exclusion. Entire parks were developed for White use, with no plans to accommodate Black visitors. As the system was initially conceived, only one small recreational area was designated for day use by African American citizens.

The practice of defining a space as "White only" could be achieved in the segregated South by law or by custom. In Virginia, the 1926 Massenberg Public Assemblage Act required racial separation in places of entertainment, particularly those with fixed seating, like theaters and sports stadiums. The passage of this statute was controversial, not because prominent White political leaders disagreed with the practice of racial segregation, but because they questioned whether it was necessary to codify it into law. The *Lynchburg News, Norfolk Virginian-Pilot, Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch*, and *Richmond News Leader* all opposed the bill on the grounds that "segregation practiced voluntarily by the two races is incomparably more desirable than segregation made mandatory by formal enactment."[9] Douglas Southall Freeman, editor of the *News Leader,* prominent southern historian, and historical consultant for the NPS Virginia battlefield parks, preferred to "have the negro conform to a custom than to compel obedience to a law."[10] Nevertheless, Virginia legislators were reluctant to vote *against* segregation, and the Massenberg Public Assemblage Act became law in 1926 without Governor Harry Byrd's signature.[11]

As Grace Elizabeth Hale has argued, the passage of formal Jim Crow statutes across the South in the early twentieth century "were as much admissions of weakness as labels of power," acknowledgements that custom alone could not keep African Americans in their "place."[12] Nevertheless, custom continued to be a powerful force in many sectors of social life in Virginia. Although the Massenberg Public Assemblage Act officially mandated separation in places of public entertainment and recreation, parks were not specifically listed by the statute. In 1942, NPS Regional Director Thomas Allen noted that "there is no specific law prohibiting Negroes from using the state parks and recreational areas" in Virginia. Nevertheless, segrega-

9 Wynes, "The Evolution of Jim Crow Laws," 420.

10 Douglas J. Smith, *Managing White Supremacy: Race, Politics, and Citizenship in Jim Crow Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 119.

11 Wynes, "The Evolution of Jim Crow Laws," 420.

12 Hale, "'For Colored' and 'For White,'" 177.

tion was enforced by custom and practice throughout the state park system. Allen observed, "Negroes are not permitted in the state parks or recreational areas under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission of Virginia, except that one recreational area in the state is set aside exclusively for their use and no one of the white race is permitted to use that area."[13]

The Virginia Conservation Commission did not use large segregation signs to deter African American visitors from going to the White parks in the state. As historic preservationist Robert Weyeneth has noted, segregation signs were often "unnecessary because white space was commonly recognized by both races."[14] In conversation with Regional Director Thomas Allen, state conservation officials reported that they made "no effort to publicize the fact that Negroes are barred from the areas used by the white race." The Commissioner asserted that such publicity was not needed: "the colored people just don't go to the white areas." The state did publicize the existence of a "Negro only" recreational area in its promotional literature to guide and direct Black residents to the facilities there. Moreover, many of the Commission's travel guides were also illustrated with photographs featuring visitors recreating in the parks, which implicitly marked spaces as White or Black (see Figures 17 and 18).[15] In the wake of his conversation with state officials, Allen concluded that segregation in state parks was enforced in Virginia even in the absence of a specific law. The existence of the Massenberg Public Assemblage Act "and other laws requiring segregation of Negroes as well as the long-standing custom of segregation of the colored race in Virginia" was sufficient to ensure racial separation. Allen also speculated that "the Negroes' own inherent embarrassment when mixing with the white race" may also "explain why Negroes have not used the state parks and recreational areas set aside for the white race in Virginia."[16] He provided no evidence to support this specious claim.

The recreational area provided for African American use in the state was designed to provide limited opportunities for recreation, but it did not truly duplicate the facilities available in the White parks. When it opened in 1941, the small recreational area in Prince Edward-Gallion State Forest was designed for day use only, featuring a swimming beach, access to fishing, and picnic areas—but no overnight accommodations or camping. This small 28-acre recreational area located in central Virginia was dwarfed by the 16,000 acres set aside for White recreational use in the state park system. Moreover, while state officials labored to construct a park system that ensured that White residents had access to outdoor recreational

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13 Thomas Allen, Regional Director, to NPS Director, 6 June 1942, Box 278, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. The Virginia State Commission on Conservation and Development was reorganized as the Virginia Conservation Commission in 1938, and later, into the Virginia Department of Conservation and Development in 1948.

14 Robert R. Weyeneth, "The Architecture of Racial Segregation: The Challenges of Preserving a Problematical Past," *The Public Historian*, 27 no. 4 (Fall 2005), 14.

15 For example, see *Virginia State Parks* (Richmond, VA: Division of Publicity and Advertising), DR 209, A. Willis Robertson Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA.

16 Thomas Allen, Regional Director, to NPS Director, 6 June 1942, Box 278, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

Legend
OF THE FAIRY STONES
A BEAUTIFUL LEGEND is told of how the fairy, or lucky stones, found so abundantly in the Fairy Stone State Park, were discovered and named. The legend runs that hundreds of years before King Powhatan's dynasty came into power, long before the woods breathed the gentle spirit of the lovely Pocahontas, the fairies were dancing around a spring of limpid water, playing with naiads and wood nymphs, when an elfin messenger arrived from a strange city, far, far, away, bringing the sad tidings of the death of Christ.
When these creatures of the forest heard the terrible story of the crucifixion, they wept. As the tears fell upon the earth, they were crystallized into little pebbles on each of which was formed a beautiful cross. When the fairies disappeared from the enchanted spot, the ground about the spring and the adjacent valley was strewn with these unique mementoes of that melancholy event.
For many years, thousands of people have held these little crosses of stone in more or less superstitious awe, being firm in the belief that they will protect the wearer against witchcraft, sickness, accidents and disasters of all kinds. All the stones have the shape of a cross. Many of them are of the St. Andrew's variety, others are Roman, while those most sought after are the Maltese.
Fairy Stone State Park
LOCATION
Fairy Stone Park is located near the town of Bassett, in Patrick county. It can be reached by automobile over Route 220 to Bassett, thence over Route 57 to the park, or over Route 8 to the junction of Route 625, thence over Route 625 to the park. Mailing address: Stuart, Virginia.
DESCRIPTION
Covering 5,000 acres, Fairy Stone Park takes its name from the lucky or fairy stones which are found so abundantly in the area. It is one of the most attractive parks in the system, having a lake of 168 acres, which is well stocked with game fish, including large mouth bass and bream.
The lake is especially popular for boating as it has numerous coves which lead to beautiful forested areas. The park has a new tent and trailer camping area, located in a wooded section adjacent to the picnic grounds. The facilities and fees are indicated in the "General Information" section of this booklet. There is a stable from which horses may be rented for riding along the trails.
There are nine cabins overlooking the lake, all equipped with modern conveniences and indoor sanitation. All buildings are equipped with electricity for lighting and cooking. The roads in the park lead through beautiful regions.
So great has been the demand for the use of the two picnic areas that another picnic shelter has been erected and the area enlarged. The trail system has also been improved. Added to these facilities are an excellent bathing beach, diving tower, large parking area and a modern bathhouse. A modern restaurant and store provide prepared meals, groceries, etc.
PLANT AND ANIMAL LIFE
To Fairy Stone Park goes the distinction of having a remnant of virgin forest. Well removed from the recreational development, one can see many interesting birds, mammals and plants on a day's hike, then rest beneath the towering tulip poplars, oaks, white pines, hickories and sycamores.
While some of the larger species of wildlife have become extinct, one may see the numerous song birds, squirrels, chipmunks, and swift moving hawks, and the tracks of raccoons, foxes and minks. The immature blue heron, in glistening white plumage, wades along the shore of the lake in the summer. Kingfishers take a headlong plunge in an effort to capture a small shiner. Muskrats create a miniature wake in the water late in the afternoon as they explore the lake shore. A bass rises to the surface with a resounding splash and ovals ripple from shore to shore. In season the flowering plants reward those who go in search of beauty in nature's garden. Rhododendron, azalea, laurel, dogwood, redbud and myriads of herbaceous plants add a luster to the landscape.
Panoramic view showing the bath house, beautiful green lawn, shelter, white sand bathing beach and a portion of the big lake with its bathing and swimming area.
Trailer and tent camping spot is available.
Fairy Stone Group . . . Riders against the sky.
Cabin life is unhurried and casual.

Figure 17. Literature produced by the Virginia State Commission on Conservation and Development provided detailed information about the amenities at various parks in the state. The depiction of White visitors recreating at Fairy Stone State Park marked this as White space even in the absence of a 'White only' designation. (Virginia State Parks, Virginia State Conservation and Development Commission (Division of Publicity and Advertising, n.d.), Box 48, RG 18 Department of Conservation and Development, Division of History Papers Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA. Courtesy of the Library of Virginia.)

spaces within a fifty-mile radius of their places of residence, they remained unconcerned that Black citizens were not afforded with this same opportunity. Virginia's promotional literature acknowledged that, unlike state parks, the state's small recreational areas "were developed mainly for day use by people living within an easy touring radius." African American residents of populous coastal communities would have had to travel nearly 150 miles to reach the Prince Edward recreational area; those living in the far western reaches of the state, as far as 250 miles (see Figure 19). While chronicling these inequities, the African American *New Journal and Guide* noted that many White state parks were more conveniently located. The paper concluded that the facilities provided by the state for African American use were "designed to pacify colored residents of the state by giving them a 'place to play'" but were not comparable to those developed for their White counterparts. The paper decried the expenditure of public funds, derived from taxes paid by both Black and White residents of the state, to construct and maintain parks "set up for the exclusive use of whites." [17]

17 "Va. Operates 9 State Parks, But Only One for Negroes," *New Journal and Guide,* 25 August 1951; "Continuance in Virginia Equal Park Facilities Suit Granted," *New Journal and Guide*, 18 December 1948. *Virginia State Parks* (Richmond, VA: Division of Publicity and Advertising), DR 209, A. Willis Robertson Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA.

STATE Recreational AREAS
These areas were developed mainly for day use by people living within easy touring radius. None has cabins or overnight accommodations. They are open seven days a week from the last week in May through the week after Labor Day. Admittance is free to the public and there is no parking fee.
Each area has a lake, well stocked with game fish, including bass, bream and crappie. Fishing season is June 20-Nov. 30 and fishermen are required to have either a county or a State fishing license. Each area has a bathhouse, for the use of which there is a moderate charge, a sand bathing beach and life guard protection. In addition, each has picnic areas with shelters, tables, drinking water, open fireplaces and sanitary facilities, all free of charge. Each also has a store where soft drinks, candies, etc., may be obtained, but these concessions do not provide prepared meals.
Holliday Lake.
Picnic shelter at Holliday Lake.
BEAR CREEK LAKE
Located in Cumberland county, just off United States Route 60, west of Cumberland Courthouse.
GOODWYN LAKE
Located in Prince Edward county, three miles off United States Route 360, south of Burkeville.
HOLLIDAY LAKE
Located in Appomattox county, off State Route 24, a connecting highway between United States Routes 60 and 460.
PRINCE EDWARD LAKE
(for Negroes)
Located in Prince Edward county, one and one-half miles off United States Route 360, south of Burkeville.
The beach at Goodwyn Lake.
The beach at Prince Edward Lake.
Boating and bathing at Bear Creek Lake.

Figure 18. In the same publication, Prince Edward Lake is clearly designated "for Negroes." An image of African American sunbathers and visitors accompanies the brief description of the state recreational area. Unlike state parks, recreational areas were much smaller and were intended for day use only. (Virginia State Parks, Virginia State Conservation and Development Commission [Division of Publicity and Advertising, n.d.], Box 48, RG 18 Department of Conservation and Development, Division of History Papers Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA. Courtesy of the Library of Virginia.)

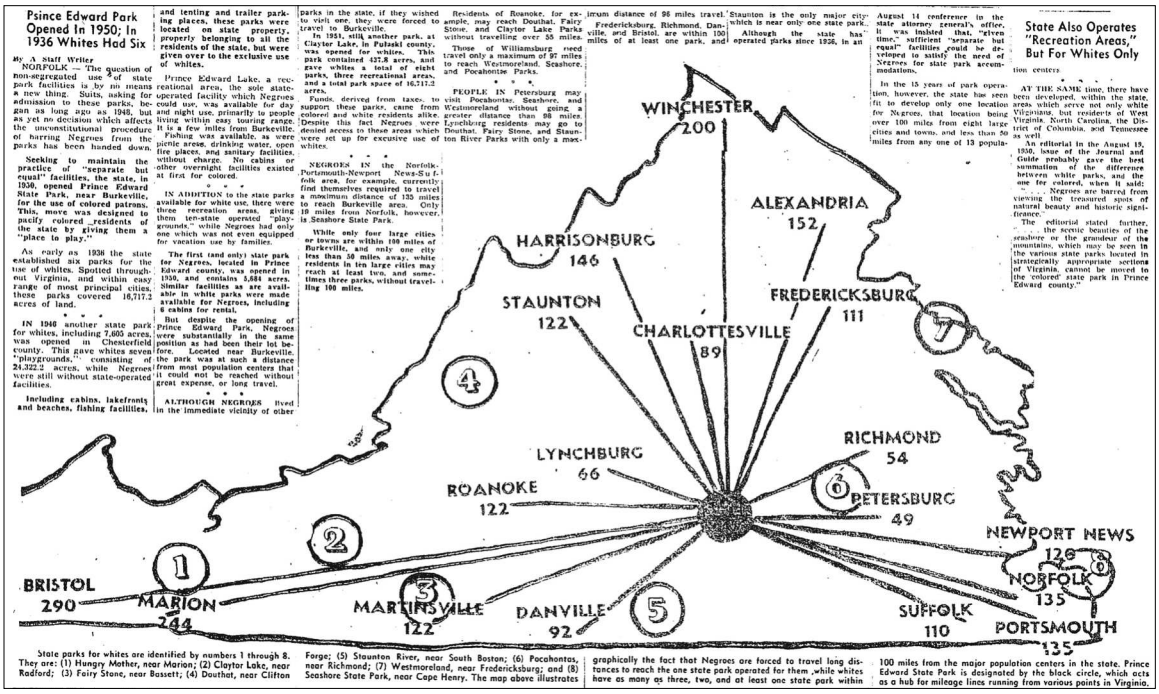

Figure 19. This map published in the African American newspaper, the Norfolk New Journal and Guide, illustrated the distance Black residents from various parts of the state would have to travel to reach the single African American recreational area developed for their use. In contrast, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Development strove to provide White residents with access to outdoor recreation within fifty miles of their homes. This inequity persisted even after Virginia "equalized" the facilities in Prince Edward and established a larger state park there. (Published in association with "Virginia Operates Nine State Parks, But Only One for Negroes," New Journal and Guide, 25 August 1951. Used with permission of the New Journal and Guide, Norfolk, VA.)

The gross inequities in state park systems throughout the South made them vulnerable to legal challenge. In 1948, after being refused entry at Staunton River State Park, Maceo Conrad Martin filed a discrimination suit against the Virginia Department of Conservation and Development. Compared to the facilities at Prince Edward Lake, Staunton River was half the distance from Martin's home in Danville, was much larger, and provided facilities that were not available in the "Negroes only" recreational area. In response, the state insisted that the facilities were "relatively equal" and were scaled appropriately for the limited demand for African American outdoor recreation. The legal posture adopted by the state of Virginia was that it sought to construct a park system "to meet proportionately the actual demand for such facilities." Ultimately, lawyers for both parties agreed to continue the case indefinitely after the state promised to equalize the facilities available in Prince Edward. After this agreement, the state appropriated nearly $200,000 to build Prince Edward State Park for Negroes. At over 3,000 acres, the park was much larger than its predecessor. The Virginia Department of

Conservation and Development maintained that its central location in the "geographic center of the state" sufficiently addressed complaints about accessibility.[18]

The "equalization" strategy adopted by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Development was also adopted by other state park agencies facing legal challenge. It echoed attempts to preserve segregated school systems through the construction of new educational facilities throughout the region. However, like Virginia, most southern states did not truly duplicate the facilities available to White residents, but instead provided one or at most a handful of state parks for African American visitors.[19] The Norfolk *New Journal and Guide* called attention to the insincerity of the state's equalization effort. "Despite the opening of Prince Edward Park, Negroes were substantially in the same position as had been their lot before," the paper asserted. The park still remained relatively inaccessible for many Black citizens who could not reach it "without great expense, or long travel."[20] Moreover, in a scathing editorial, the paper suggested that the $200,000 appropriated by the state was expended only "to cut the ground out from under a pending law suit" which sought to make the entirety of the "state's billion-dollar park system" accessible to African American taxpayers. The state's feeble gesture toward equalization confined African American residents "to one isolated area" that lacked many of the attributes of other state parks.[21] Prince Edward State Park included opportunities for picnicking and provided access to woodland, streams, and a lake, but it lacked "the scenic beauties of the seashore or the grandeur of the mountains" that White Virginians had access to as a matter of course. This kind of natural beauty could not be duplicated and moved to Prince Edward.[22] The paper concluded that the system of racial segregation the state sought to preserve in its park system rested on "a total denial of the right of Negroes to enter and use the best endowments of nature the State possesses." As the paper observed, "THE POLICY the State has employed goes beyond mere segregation. It is a policy of TOTAL EXCLUSION of one segment of the State's population from advantages enjoyed by all other segments" [emphasis original].[23]

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18 "Continuance in Virginia Equal Park Facilities Suit Granted," *New Journal and Guide,* 18 December 1948; "Suit Delayed as Negro Park Improved," *The Washington Post,* 16 December 1948. See also William E. O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion: State Parks and Jim Crow in the American South* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016), 123-124. The Virginia State Commission on Conservation and Development was reorganized as the Virginia Conservation Commission in 1938, and later, into the Virginia Department of Conservation and Development in 1948.

19 William E. O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion*, 15.

20 "Va. Operates 9 State Parks, But Only One for Negroes," *New Journal and Guide,* 25 August 1951

21 "Virginia's Jim Crow State Park," editorial, *New Journal and Guide,* 5 February 1949.

22 "A Situation that Should Not Exist in Virginia," *New Journal and Guide*, 26 August 1950. As William E. O'Brien has noted in his recent study of segregation in state parks, across the region "white visitors had exclusive access to a broader array of state parks, including choices near home, and to the best scenery, larger land areas through which to roam, the most interesting and special historical artifacts, and the best-developed recreational facilities and accommodations" (*Landscapes of Exclusion*, 9).

23 "Segregated Park System Virginia Is Fighting to Save," *New Journal and Guide,* 7 May 1955.

Regional Park Planning: Recreational Demonstration Areas

The degree to which the NPS conformed to established Virginia state park segregation policy and local custom is most clearly illustrated in the RDAs, since they were developed and planned by the NPS with the intention of transferring them to a permanent maintaining agency like a state or local park commission. These parks were established on land deemed unproductive for agricultural use and were intended to provide for the recreational needs of underserved populations. RDAs were developed and maintained by the NPS under the supervision of Assistant Director Conrad Wirth during the late 1930s. In Virginia, the NPS established two large RDAs for residents in Northern Virginia and Richmond at Chopawamsic and Swift Creek respectively. Both RDAs proposed to provide facilities for organized camps from social service organizations and scouting groups, as well as recreational day use areas.[24] Swift Creek would be transferred to the state of Virginia in 1946, becoming Pocahontas State Park, but the NPS decided to retain Chopawamsic RDA as Prince William Forest Park. Additionally, the NPS also developed six small wayside parks along Virginia state highways as part of the program. These small parks (all under 60 acres) were transferred to the State Highway Department in 1942. The purpose of the waysides was to provide opportunities for motorists and local residents to stop along the roadside to picnic and recreate at playfields, wading ponds, and the like.[25]

In these recreation areas the NPS planned and maintained racially segregated facilities before they were transferred to the state of Virginia. In some of the wayside parks, the NPS did plan facilities in accordance with the state's policy of total exclusion, providing accommodation for White but not Black visitors. However, in other waysides as well as the larger RDAs at Chopawamsic and Swift Creek, the NPS proposed the creation of duplicative facilities that would serve White and Black visitors in separate parts of the parks. Regional NPS planners headquartered in Richmond sought to maximize racial separation within Virginia's RDAs, designating areas for Black and White use with distinctive place names, and situating them along separate watersheds with separate points of entry.

The impetus to provide duplicative facilities for African American use in the RDAs came out of the office of Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes in the fall of 1936. Adviser on Negro Affairs Robert Weaver called Ickes' attention to the fact that organized camping facilities were only being developed for White use within the RDAs, and the secretary asked NPS Assistant Director Conrad Wirth to address this problem. As Wirth's office, the Branch of Recreational Planning and State Cooperation, complied with this request, NPS Director Arno B. Cammerer questioned whether there was sufficient demand to warrant the development

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24 *Recreational Demonstration Projects: As Illustrated by Chopawamsic, Virginia* (Washington, DC: GPO, n.d.), Box 22, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

25 H.E. Weatherwax, Region III Officer, to Conrad Wirth, 9 March 1935; Fred T. Johnston, Acting Regional Director, to NPS director, 2 May 1942, Box 131, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

of facilities for African American organized camping.[26] The RDA program was designed specifically to serve the recreational needs of urban populations, particularly those without the resources to travel to state or national parks. Given this larger objective, Associate Director A. E. Demaray challenged the director's assertion that there was insufficient demand. "There is just as great a need for providing facilities for the underprivileged negro as for the underprivileged white person," he wrote. Moreover, Demaray intimated that "the Secretary will insist that some Provision be made for negroes, if funds can be obtained for that purpose and maintaining and operating agents can be found."[27]

The Branch of Recreational Planning and State Cooperation developed a series of recommendations intended to govern the placement of African American recreational facilities within the RDAs. Of the thirty-seven RDAs under development in 1936, more than half were designated for the exclusive use of White visitors and one for the exclusive use of Black visitors. Initially, no African American facilities were recommended "on areas being added to State parks or on areas where the white population predominates." Additionally, it was "deemed inadvisable" to develop small parks for dual use. In areas recommended for the development of duplicative facilities, preference was given to those areas where it was possible to assure "complete separation of the negroes and whites." In drafting these recommendations, Kenneth B. Simmons acknowledged that the determination of which sites would be appropriate for dual use was "very arbitrary" and suggested the NPS consult with local and state officials to further refine the list. His initial recommendations were revised after their formal presentation to the Secretary of Interior by Wirth's office. Chopawamsic was marked on both the original and revised list for joint development. But Swift Creek, initially flagged for "either white or colored, but not both" (probably because of its planned incorporation into the Virginia state park system), was redesignated for the development of duplicative facilities on the revised list. In total, eleven RDAs were designated for dual use in the southern states.[28]

The Branch of Recreational Planning and State Cooperation did not develop specific guidelines for the creation of small wayside parks.[29] Nevertheless, in Virginia segregation was enforced at all the waysides. At some parks, this was accomplished through the practice of excluding African American visitors entirely, at others it was achieved through the creation of duplicative facilities. For example, in June 1935, Conrad Wirth reviewed the plans for the

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26 Cammerer to Wirth and Demaray, 30 September 1936, Box 17, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. See also Young, "A Contradiction in Democratic Government," 658.

27 Demaray to Cammerer, 1 October 1936, Box 17, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. See also O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion,* 80.

28 Kenneth B. Simmons to Wirth, 22 September 1936; Wirth to Ickes, 30 September 1936; Revised List of Recreational Demonstration Projects, Waysides, and National Park Area Extensions, Embracing Lands Acquired and Optioned by the Resettlement Administration for the NPS, 16 October 1936, Box 17, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

29 Kenneth B. Simmons to Wirth, 22 September 1936; Revised List of Recreational Demonstration Projects, Waysides, and National Park Area Extensions, Embracing Lands Acquired and Optioned by the Resettlement Administration for the NPS, 16 October 1936, Box 17, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

Pittsylvania Wayside Park located south of Lynchburg along Route 29. Wirth questioned the proposed development of two small parking areas along the roadway (see Figure 20). Administratively, he noted, "it would seem preferable to make one large parking space." He also questioned why the proposed park featured so many small groupings of picnic units and associated sanitary facilities, when it might be less expensive to have larger picnic areas with fewer toilets.[30] Wirth's confusion stemmed from the NPS practice of deleting racial designations not only from public materials but also from planning documents. The blueprints associated with Virginia's wayside parks do not include annotations designating areas "White" or "Negro," but like so many other NPS planning documents from the late 1930s, this does not mean the facilities were not segregated. H. E. Weatherwax, the regional officer in the NPS state park division located in Richmond, provided additional explanatory context. The smaller parking area was designed to serve the picnic ground and comfort stations located in the eastern

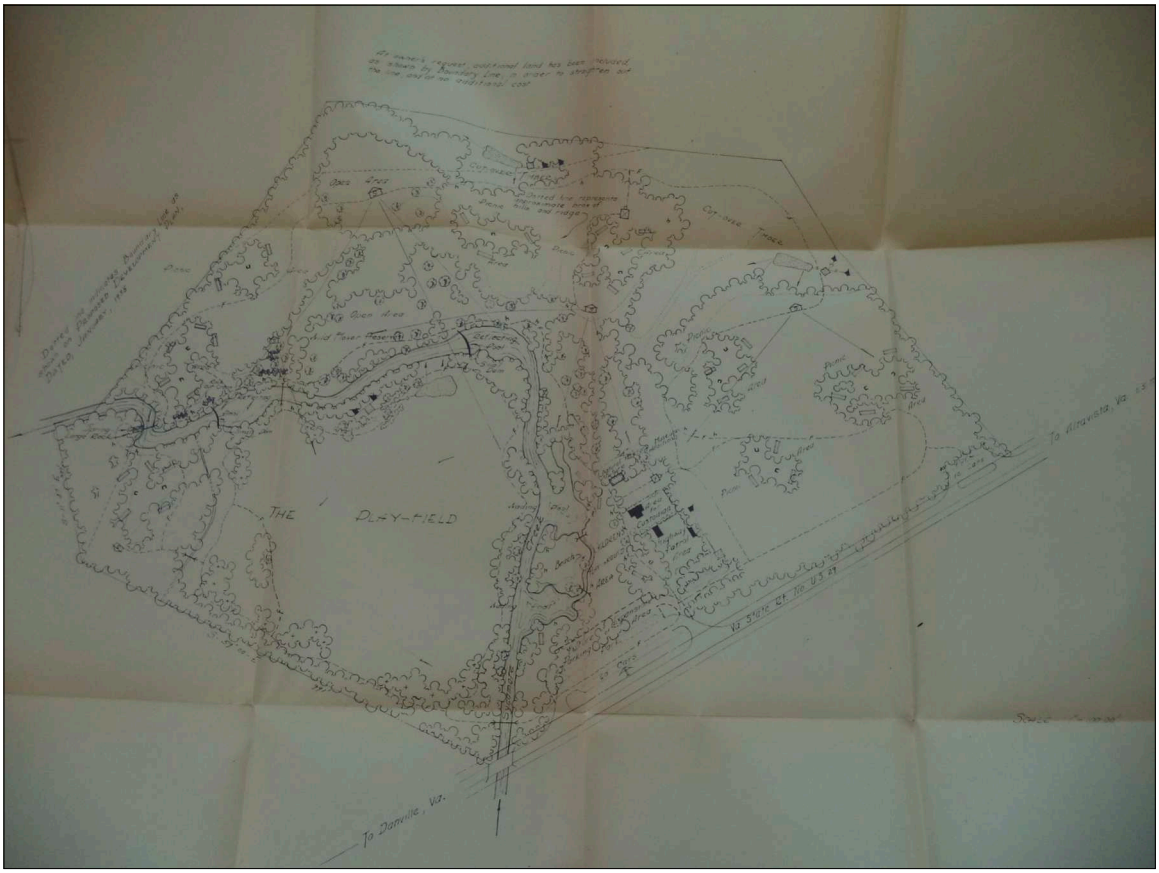

Figure 20. Early blueprint for the Pittsylvania Wayside developed by the NPS as a recreational demonstration area. The small parking lot to the far right was to be associated with a picnic ground separated from the rest of the wayside by a "steep draw" for African American visitors. However, when completed, this facility excluded African American visitors altogether. (Pittsylvania Wayside, General Layout Plan, Branch of Planning, Land Program Division, NPS, 20 May 1935, Box 31, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.)

30 Wirth to NPS Third Regional Officer, Richmond, 14 June 1935, Box 132, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

corner of the park. This area, "separated from the remainder of the property by a steep draw," was planned for use "by colored people." Weatherwax noted that this location had some deficiencies as it was not large enough to accommodate a play field like the proposed White areas.[31]

Ultimately, the additional costs associated with duplicative facilities at this site—like the need for more picnic tables and comfort stations-- were reduced at Pittsylvania Wayside by not constructing the picnic area for Black motorists at all. Instead, as in the state parks, Black picnickers were excluded entirely. In 1939, while the park was still under NPS administration, E. T. Clark visited the Pittsylvania Wayside with a group of African American 4-H club children and their parents. Their planned outing was disrupted, he reported, when "the caretaker there informed us in an abrupt manner that the grounds are for white only and Negroes are not allowed therein." Clark noted that he had not seen any segregation signs, and assured the custodian that his group would treat the grounds with respect and behave in an orderly fashion. The custodian summoned the state police to evict the group from the park. "We wish to be law abiding citizens and respect all laws," Clark wrote. "If Negroes are excluded, we respectfully request from your department a statement to what effect and also the erection of signs so that future embarrassment will be avoided."[32]

In a drafted letter written in reply to Clark's inquiry, Acting NPS Director J. R. White noted the NPS planned to turn the wayside parks over to the Virginia State Highway Department in the future, and consequently, "consideration has been given to local custom and legal requirements for racial separation now in effect in the state." The waysides, he wrote bluntly, "are planned for use by white persons."[33] However, while White's draft reflected NPS policy when the initial recommendations for the RDAs were made, the shifting ground of Supreme Court jurisprudence related to segregation in the late 1930s altered the landscape. Conrad Wirth reviewed the draft of White's letter and advised him to secure the opinion of NPS attorneys before sending it. The NPS Office of Chief Counsel cautioned the Acting Director, "Trouble is liable to develop if Waysides are restricted to white people." While Virginia custom mandated segregation, "to avoid discrimination, separate comparable facilities for Negroes must be provided." Referring to *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada* (1938), NPS counsel noted that the Supreme Court had recently decided that if equitable segregated facilities were *not* provided, then African Americans must be admitted to White facilities which formally excluded them.[34] White's letter was redrafted. Reference to the requirements of Virginia segregation law or the exclusive use of the waysides by White people were deleted, since the custodian

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31 Weatherwax, Third Regional Officer, to M.C. Huppuch, Land Program Division, 24 June 1935, Box 131, Entry 199, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

32 E.T. Clark to NPS, 25 August 1939, Box 131, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

33 J.R. White, Acting NPS Director, to E. T. Clark, 2 September 1939, Box 131, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

34 Knox to Moskey, Office of Chief Counsel, 6 September 1939, Box 131, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

had acted outside of the parameters established in *Gaines*. "We regret you had the unfortunate experience at Pittsylvania Wayside," White apologized in the final draft before directing Clark to the "facilities for Negroes" at Chopawamsic and Swift Creek RDAs.[35] Practically speaking, Clark's access to these facilities was attenuated. While Pittsylvania Wayside was only twenty miles from his home in Gladys, VA, Swift Creek and Chopawamsic were 100 and 170 miles away respectively. Just as Prince Edward State Park remained too distant for many of Virginia's African American residents, so too were the facilities developed by the NPS.

In other wayside parks, the NPS avoided this problem by developing duplicative facilities. At Pulaski Wayside, south of Roanoke, a separate picnic area was constructed for Black visitors.[36] Although racial distinctions were not indicated on park planning documents, the *Pulaski Southwest Times* reported on the formalization of segregation in the park in August 1938. "Subdivision of the Pulaski wayside park on the top of Draper Mountain will take place today when the National Park Service erects segregation signs at the entrance ways on either side of the highway, allotting certain sections to white visitors and others to colored picnickers and visitors," the *Times* wrote. White picnicking areas were located near the concessions building, while Black picnic grounds were located "below the crest on the Pulaski side." Reached by stone steps, the area featured wooded trails, fire pits, and picnic tables.[37] Although the *Times* described this space as "similar to the white sections," at least one local resident disagreed. M. A. Calfee described the practice of segregation at Pulaski as a "disgrace," and the Black picnic ground as a "little space at the bottom of the mountain with no lovely view at all."[38] Just like the *New Journal and Guide's* complaints about the scenery available at Prince Edward State Park, Calfee's observations point to one of the complications associated with providing "duplicative" facilities in areas of scenic beauty or historic significance—in many cases, these features cannot be replicated. Acting NPS Director A. E. Demaray acknowledged Calfee's complaint, but insisted that federal funds should be used to provide the "most benefit to the public as a whole." This statement implied that segregated facilities were preferred by the majority of visitors. The Acting Director concluded his letter by rearticulating a legal posture he had adopted in relation to other letters of complaint in Shenandoah National Park and elsewhere. As long as facilities were provided for Black visitors, he intimated, segregation was not being enforced with the intention to discriminate.[39]

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35 J.R. White to E.T. Clark, 13 September 1939, Box 131, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

36 In 1937, the NPS denoted the relative size of the African American population in both Roanoke and Lynchburg—18 percent of residents in Roanoke and 24 percent of residents in Lynchburg were Black. However, since Roanoke was a larger city, the African American community residing there had thirty percent more people than in Lynchburg (R.C. Robinson, Regional Planner, to Herbert Evison, 5 August 1937, Box 17, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD).

37 "Wayside Park is Divided for Picnickers; Many Enjoy Scenery," *Pulaski Southwest Times,* 3 August 1938, Box 131, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

38 M. A. Calfee to Commission of National Parks, 6 August 1938, Box 131, Entry 100, RG 79, College Park, MD.

39 Demaray to Calfee, 17 August 1938, Box 131, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

In the larger RDAs in the state, the NPS created duplicative facilities. In both Chopawamsic and Swift Creek RDA, the facilities established for day use as well as those created for organized camping were designated for specific groups. "Our policy," Assistant Director Conrad Wirth informed the regional director in Richmond in 1937, is "to provide sufficient facilities to meet community needs, those facilities to provide provision for both white and colored wherever such arrangement is satisfactory to the maintaining agency."[40] At Chopawamsic, the maintaining agency was to be the NPS. However, the NPS planned to turn Swift Creek RDA over to the state of Virginia for permanent maintenance. The development of duplicative facilities at this site produced considerable tension with local officials.

In Virginia's RDAs, organized camps designated for the use of Black campers were deliberately separated and screened from their White counterparts to prevent interracial mixing between campers. NPS planners maximized racial separation by siting facilities for Black and White camps on separate watersheds and providing separate points of entry. While many of the operating agencies which used these facilities—like the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts—were organized along racial lines, Black and White groups were directed to specific spaces within the parks established for their use. Once a camp had been used by Black campers during one season, it was not used by White campers the next. This policy was inaugurated at Chopawamsic after the NPS regional office in Richmond recommended "delimiting a portion of the Chopawamsic Area to be permanently devoted to negroes and to be called by a different name."[41] At Chopawamsic, "the Negro area" was defined in the spring of 1937 as that "section of the water-shed of the North Branch of Quantico Creek from the road leading north from Joplin and downstream to Ridge Road." This section would be "treated as an entirely separate area and used only by Negroes." An existing White boys' camp in this area was redesignated for African American use, and was replaced by a new White boys' camp in a separate part of the park which would "be isolated from the above mentioned Negro section."[42]

After establishing these two separate areas, regional and national park planners engaged in a year-long debate about the internal road system which would service these two distinctive parts of the park. The NPS regional office in Richmond promoted the idea of creating two completely separate entrances to the park—one for African American motorists that would steer them to the Black organized camps and day use area, and one for White motorists that would direct them to the White organized camps and day use area.[43] Planners in the national office disliked this plan for two reasons: it would double the number of contact

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40 Wirth to Region One, 20 April 1937, Box 126, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

41 Herbert Evison, Region One Regional Officer, to Branch of Recreational Planning and State Cooperation, 31 March 1937, Box 17, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

42 Assistant Director Conrad Wirth, Memorandum of Understanding: Master Plan of Chopawamsic, Location of Additional Organized Camp Sites, 15 April 1937, Box 124, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

43 Herbert Evison, Acting Regional Director, to NPS Director, 29 November 1938; Inspector Schenck to Regional Director, 19 November 1938, Box 126, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

stations and increase the staff needed to control traffic in and out of the park, and it would "require the erection of large race differentiating signs" along a major state highway that would publicly advertise the NPS's policy of segregation. Instead, they preferred a single entrance and contact station that would enable park staff to discreetly point African American travelers toward the parts of the recreational demonstration area reserved for their use along a spur road.[44]

The regional office protested this counterproposal. "If we are to be realistic in our approach to recreation planning in the southern states," Regional Planner R. C. Robinson wrote, "we must recognize and observe the long-standing attitudes and customs of the people, which require, as a fundamental, that recreational areas and facilities for the two races be kept entirely separated." The alternative proposed by the national office directed African American travelers along a route that passed "within a thousand feet" of a White organized camp, and would afford patrons of the Black day use area access to all camps. This would not satisfy southern sensibilities, White or Black, Robinson suggested. Complete segregation "should not be considered discriminatory," the regional office asserted, "since it represents the general desire of both races."[45] NPS Director Arno B. Cammerer weighed in on this debate, and noted that the right-of-way for the proposed single entry had not yet been secured. In the meantime, he supported the regional office's proposal to maintain two separate entrances. "After all this area is in Virginia," he wrote, "All the Negro wants is comparable standards in the separate area. Most of them prefer separation."[46] This posture willfully ignored letters of complaint from Black park visitors about the establishment of segregated facilities in other parks. At a conference at Chopawamsic, regional and national planners agreed that the single entrance with internal spur roads was the "ideal" solution for controlling traffic within the park, but until a right-of-way was secured, the park would continue to have two separate entrances.[47]

Cammerer felt it would be possible to direct White and Black travelers to these separate entrances without "differentiating directional signs." The director observed that Chopawamsic would be governed by the policies of the National Capital Parks, and within the District of Columbia, picnic areas, tables, golf courses and recreation centers were differentiated through distinctive place names. "We can give each camp and the day use area a name, or we can give the entire Negro area a separate name and the signs can be designed accordingly," Cammerer suggested.[48] In correspondence with the regional office, Acting Supervisor of Recreation and Land Planning Fred T. Johnston urged regional planners to adopt this approach

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44 Conrad Wirth, Supervisor of Recreation and Land Planning, to Region I Director, 3 January 1939; Wirth to Region I Director, 8 March, 1939, Box 126, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

45 R. C. Robinson, Regional Recreation Planner, Technical Review, 10 January 1939; M R. Tillotson, Regional Director, to NPS Director, 21 January 1939, Box 126, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

46 Cammerer to Wirth, 1 February 1939, Box 126, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

47 Ray M. Schenck, Administrative Inspector, to Region I Director, Box 126, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

48 Cammerer to Wirth, 1 February 1939, Box 126, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

on planning documents as well: "It is recommended that the discriminating labels of 'Negro' and 'White' be deleted from Service plans. These sections might be given a different name, usually suggested by some natural or historical feature."[49]

This same approach was adopted at Swift Creek RDA, where the NPS proposed to construct an organized campground for African American use in an isolated section of the park. This proposal was vigorously opposed by the Swift Creek local advisory committee. Their resistance was representative of the local southern response to the NPS's proposals to construct duplicative facilities in selected RDAs. In September of 1937, the Branch of Recreational Panning and State Cooperation reported that although some southern states had been more receptive than others to the idea, the only operative organized camp for African American use in the southern states was located at Chopawamsic. "Prejudice makes it practically impossible to provide for Negroes on areas also intended for white use, and has so far prevented us from developing even the few portions of some of the Recreational Demonstration Areas originally planned for Negro use." Wirth's office noted that the NPS could proceed and develop facilities despite these objections and insist on the maintenance of these areas as "a condition of turning the areas over to the states," but speculated that such a posture might backfire. If southern states refused these terms, the NPS might have to maintain the effected RDAs indefinitely. The Branch of Recreational Planning and State Cooperation proposed to approach the development of each park on an individual basis, negotiating with state officials to try to reach agreements in a way "most satisfactory to them and to us."[50]

In Richmond, local officials preferred to develop Swift Creek for the exclusive use of White citizens and to identify a separate tract of land for the development of African American facilities.[51] By December 1937, however, the national office reported "there are no funds available for the purchase of land for development as Negro Recreational Areas."[52] Regional Officer Herbert Evison hoped to ameliorate the advisory committee's concerns by assuring local leaders that the planned African American development would be completely separated from the White area. In a formal presentation of NPS plans, Associate Recreational Specialist Stanley M. Hawkins called attention to the existing roadway dividing the two proposed developments, their relative size and position, and the "natural cover" that would screen the African American recreational area. As Evison had noted in previous conversations, Hawkins

49 Johnston to Acting Region I Director, 29 June 1939, Box 126, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

50 Acting Assistant Director to NPS Director, 29 September 1937, Box 17, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

51 R. C. Robinson, Regional Planner, to Herbert Evison, 4 May 1937, Box 17, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

52 Fred T. Johnston, Acting Assistant Director, to Region I Director, 2 December 1937.

reiterated that the area proposed for African American use lay on a separate watershed and could be serviced by a separate entrance (see Figure 21).[53]

The committee was not persuaded. Only one member supported the NPS's proposal. In opposition, Fannie Crenshaw, a member of the committee who was also the director of physical education at Westhampton College and member of the camp committee of the YWCA, raised the prospect of interracial socialization. White parents would not allow their girls to attend a camp in Swift Creek "if a Negro camp were allowed in the same general vicinity," she maintained. Opportunities for hiking and nature study would have to be severely limited in order for both Black and White groups to use the park, and even so, she suggested, "it would be difficult to control the intermingling of the campers during the camping season." Crenshaw's remarks, Hawkins reported, were resoundingly supported by the committee at-large. After listening to his presentation, the group passed two resolutions rejecting the NPS's proposal. The first discouraged any development of African American facilities in the park and called for the completion of the White camps currently under construction, and the second announced the committee's intention to locate and acquire land for an alternative site for African American recreation. Ironically, as the meeting came to a close, the group also discussed the oversaturation of the Richmond market for facilities for organized White camping, with camps "fighting for … membership" and failing to operate at their "fullest capacity." The group evidently saw no contradiction between their refusal to provide camping facilities at Swift Creek for a population that was completely unserved and their insistence on developing them for a population that was already overserved.[54]

Associate Regional Director Herbert Evison was stung by the rejection of his proposals. "It is the profound conviction of this office that neither logic nor Southern sentiment with regard to Negroes can justify the stand taken by this committee. Furthermore, there is immediate need for group camping facilities for Negroes in this area," he wrote. "We are then brought face to face with what appears to us to be a major matter of policy." The NPS was left with three options, Evison observed: (1) to accept the recommendation of the committee and urge them to promptly secure an alternative site for African American recreation in the nearby vicinity of Swift Creek, (2) to formally divide Swift Creek RDA into two distinctive RDAs, thus removing the southern section of the park from the purview of the local advisory committee, or (3) to proceed with the development of African American camping facilities despite the objections of local leaders. "Since the lands involved are federally owned and are therefore legally fully under the control of the National Park Service, we may proceed, in defiance of the committee's attitude, to develop group camp facilities in the southern section of Swift Creek for Negro use." Evison predicted that the latter course would "provoke a storm" of

53 Herbert Evison, Region One Regional Officer, to Branch of Recreational Planning and State Cooperation, 31 March 1937; Hawkins to Region I Director, 23 December 1937, Box 17, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. See also O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion,* 88–89.

54 Hawkins to Region I Director, 23 December 1937, Box 17, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. See also O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion,* 88–89.

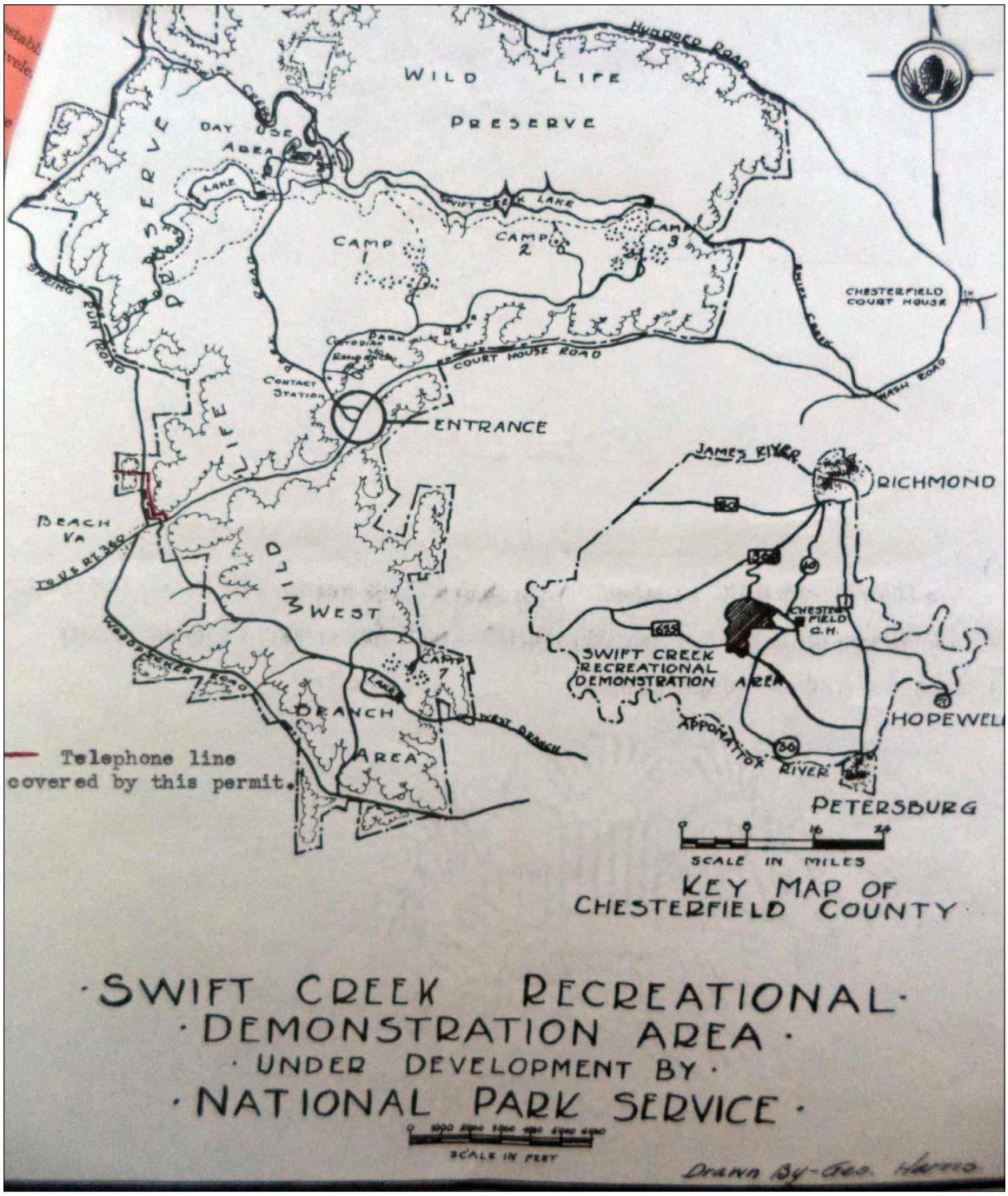

Figure 21. This map of Swift Creek RDA south of Richmond illustrates the isolated location of the "West Branch Area" designated for the use of African American organized camps. Camp 7 was used by groups like the Phyllis Wheatley YWCA and the Girl Scouts. (Swift Creek Recreational Demonstration Area, Box 121, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.)

opposition, but he felt that he would be able to recruit support from other influential figures in the state.[55]

By the end of 1938, the regional office threw its support behind the proposal to develop the African American section of the park as a completely separate recreational demonstration area. "Due to local conditions, this office does not deem it advisable to relate this area to the [White] Swift Creek Area in any way whatsoever," Acting Regional Director H. K. Roberts wrote. "Local objection to the use of a portion of the Swift Creek Area by Negroes could be overcome much more easily if the two areas were entirely divorced from one another."[56] However, the national office dismissed this idea, noting that dividing the existing recreational area into two separate projects would unnecessarily complicate its administration and development. Nevertheless, it approved referring to the part of the park designated for African American use as the "West Branch Area," provided it was understood that this site was part of the Swift Creek RDA.[57] As in Chopawamsic, the regional office insisted on the development of a separate point of entry for this part of the park.[58]

In Swift Creek, the site in the West Branch Area was not chosen because of its relationship to desirable recreational amenities but because of its distance from established White camps and the White day use area. The NPS regional office noted that the stream flow at the site was "not considered adequate to afford safe swimming conditions," and was also uncertain whether Virginia state health authorities would approve of using existing streams for swimming in any event.[59] In October 1938, the regional office also received a complaint from a private resort owner downstream from the West Branch site about possible contamination of Swift Creek by the anticipated African American campers. John A. Furman, the owner of a private bathing beach called "Lakeview," operated his facilities nearly twenty miles from the recreational demonstration area. He was unconcerned about White use of the creek, but believed that the "establishment of a negro beach" upstream from his own property would mean his "entire ruination."[60] Furman's complaint was drafted by his attorney and forwarded to the NPS by Congressman P. H. Drewry who described his constituent's concern as "self-explanatory."[61] White supremacists routinely insisted that African American citizens were carriers of

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55 Evison to Wirth, 10 January 1938, Box 17, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. See also O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion*, 88–89.

56 Roberts to NPS Director, 16 November 1938, Box 119, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

57 Fred T. Johnston, Acting Supervisor of Recreation and Land Planning, to Region I Director, 19 November 1938, Box 119, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

58 E. M. Lisle, Assistant Regional Director, to NPS Director, 20 January 1939, Box 119, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

59 Acting Associate Regional Director to Ray Schenek, NPS Inspector, 13 October 1938, Box 119, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

60 J. J. Temple to Hon. P. H. Drewry, 13 October 1938, Box 121, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

61 P. H. Drewry to NPS Regional Director, 24 October 1938, Box 121, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

diseases like turberculosis and syphilis. This demeaning racist trope was frequently mobilized to justify the segregation of public facilities like swimming pools and bathing beaches in the name of protecting public health.[62] In the state of Virginia, it might also unleash extralegal violence. In Roanoke, the development of a new private Black bathing beach located upstream from a White resort in 1926 provoked similar objections. The Roanoke County Board of Supervisors went on record to oppose "the use of the said property for the purpose named, unless and until proper … safe guards were thrown around it for the protection of the neighborhood and the public." Just days before the new recreational area was scheduled to open, the dam that created the swimming hole was bombed and locker rooms and other facilities were vandalized. According to the *Roanoke Times,* the "sledgehammer tactics" deployed by local White vigilantes had the impact of "an adult tornado."[63]

In Swift Creek RDA, NPS Regional Director Herbert Evison dismissed Furman's appeal, noting the great distance between Furman's establishment and the recreational demonstration area and observing that in addition to the park, many private homes and farms, including some occupied by African American residents, already existed along Swift Creek watershed. The issues Furman raised, Evison suggested, would only have "unhappy results" if the proprietor himself drew attention to and "publicize[d] the situation."[64] Nevertheless, early plans indicated that the NPS proposed to build a contained swimming pool for the African American organized camps in Swift Creek RDA. In time, the NPS abandoned this idea and created a small lake by damming the stream.

The resulting bathing facilities were not comparable to those for White use. Acting Regional Director H. K. Roberts referred to the lake as a "sorry mudhole," but noted others involved in park planning opposed the creation of a larger lake further downstream "due to sanitary conditions" and persistent concerns about watershed contamination. Roberts did not believe these reservations were valid, and argued that objectively the water quality in the area would be superior to the more heavily used White recreational lake.[65] Roberts was able to ensure that this facility was more adequate by excavating some additional rock and soil to deepen it.[66] Nevertheless, the small size of this lake was later used as a justification for scaling back the construction of an additional African American organized camp in the West

62 Mark M. Smith, *How Race is Made: Slavery, Segregation, and the Senses* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 64–65.

63 Andrew W. Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours: How Black Beaches Became White Wealth in the Coastal South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 47-48.

64 Drewry to Regional Director, Richmond, 24 October 1938; Herbert Evison, Acting Regional Director to Drewry, 31 October 1938, Box 121, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

65 Roberts to Wirth, 31 August 1939, Box 121, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

66 Roberts to NPS Director, 18 October 1939, Box 121, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

Branch Area, since the addition of many more campers would overload the existing swimming facilities.[67]

The NPS had effectively designed the organized camping and swimming facilities in the West Branch Area to contain the threat of contagion, both imagined and real. The small lake was so isolated that during a polio epidemic in 1944, Camp Pinoaka—an African American Girl Scout camp—was given clearance by the Virginia State Health Department to continue its operation. As long as no new campers entered the area, the girls in residence were already functionally quarantined. The White camp operating at the same time was closed.[68] Camp Pinoaka continued to use the facilities developed in Swift Creek even after its formal transfer to the state of Virginia. This isolated camp site was listed alongside the 28-acre recreational area in Prince Edward County as one of only two facilities maintained for African American use in the state park equalization lawsuit filed in federal court by Maceo Conrad Martin in 1948.[69]

The resistance of local and state governments to the development of African American camping facilities indelibly shaped the development of the RDAs. As the NPS tried to reach cooperative working agreements with state officials, funds appropriated for the program were expended on the development of facilities intended for White use. By the late 1930s, the Roosevelt administration decreased the funds available for the program and reduced the ranks of the CCC, which provided the bulk of the labor. In 1939, the Secretary of Interior's Adviser on Negro Affairs W. J. Trent noted that of the fifteen RDAs initially proposed for White and Black use throughout the country, only two had been available during the 1938 season (one of these being Chopawamsic). Three more, including Swift Creek were slated to open in 1939, and three others the following year. "When funds for . . . acquisition and development were curtailed," Trent observed, "the Negro areas were left out." With the funds available exhausted, "it has been the Negro area that has been omitted." Trent questioned whether enough funds would be available to even complete the camps in the pipeline for the 1940 season, and asked the secretary to either earmark remaining funds or to redirect resources to complete the development of proposed African American camps.[70] When emergency relief appropriations were cut more deeply in the summer of 1939, Trent despaired that the reductions imposed a "special disability on Negroes since many of their areas were just being built or were proposed

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67 Fred T. Johnston, Acting Regional Director, to Inspector Stratton, 6 June 1941, Box 119, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

68 Narrative report, Swift Creek Recreational Demonstration Area, August 1944; R. L. Lipscomb, Custodian, to NPS Regional Director, 24 July 1944, Box 118, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. This differential treatment may also have been informed by the widespread, but mistaken, belief that African American children were less susceptible to polio than their white counterparts. See David M. Oshinsky, *Polio: An American Story* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 65–67.

69 "Suit Seeks to Break Ban at State Parks," *New Journal and Guide,* 17 July 1948; "Richmond Social Activities," *New Journal and Guide,* 28 June 1952.

70 Trent to Ickes, 21 June 1939, Box 17, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

for this coming year."[71] Acting NPS Director A. E. Demaray planned to make "every effort" to complete the unfinished units, but acknowledged that it would be impossible to initiate any new work for the foreseeable future.[72] In 1936, eleven of the fifteen RDAs designated for joint use had been located in the southern states, but as the program came to a close in 1941, only six actually provided for African American organized camping.[73]

Federal Policy: National Parks

The development of the RDAs was complicated by the need to negotiate with state and local authorities who would maintain the parks after their formal transfer. However, even in Chopawamsic, an area that NPS intended to retain, segregated facilities were constructed. This perspective also informed the development of visitor facilities in the national parks themselves where NPS policy was governed by local law and custom. In many parts of the country, no distinction was made between White and Black visitors. The NPS adopted the "general accepted thesis" that "where colored people and white people occupy approximately the same plane in the sphere of normal everyday activities no special facilities are, or need be, provided for colored people." If a state allowed both Black and White residents to use the same schools, restaurants, and trains, the NPS could do the same. However, in parts of the country where segregation was enforced, Landscape Division Chief H. Thompson believed "dual facilities in our National Park and Monument areas are, or should be provided." The states he identified included the eleven former states of the Confederacy, border states like Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, and West Virginia, the National Capital Parks in Washington, DC, as well as Oklahoma, Arizona, and New Mexico.[74]

As in Chopawamsic, the NPS developed plans for the creation of duplicative facilities within these states. However, Director Cammerer did not believe that the need for facilities for Black visitors was "just as great" as those for White visitors, or that facilities for African American use should be constructed as a matter of course. "I don't think that we are required to anticipate all kinds of service in the parks by installing facilities unless there is a demand," he wrote. "In the Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains National Parks I have always said that we have a location for colored camps in each park, but that these will not be built unless there is a proven demand therefor."[75] Under these guidelines, the construction of

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71 Trent to Ickes, 10 July 1939, Box 17, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

72 Demaray to Ickes, 21 July 1939, Box 17, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

73 Herbert Evison, Assistant Supervisor of Recreation and Land Planning, to Elizabeth Brown, 7 March 1941, Box 17, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

74 H. Thompson, Chief of Landscape Division, to Chief of Planning, Status of Facilities for Colored Visitors to National Parks, 24 January 1939, Box 379, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

75 Cammerer to Demaray and Wirth, 30 September 1936, Box 17, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. See also O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion,* 80.

visitor facilities for African American use in the national parks proceeded in fits and starts, and was frequently prompted by reports of conflict from local park superintendents or letters of complaint from African American visitors which reached the Secretary of Interior's office.

Arguably, the need for outdoor recreational opportunities was greater for African American citizens than their White counterparts, who were able to recreate in local and state park systems at will. In Virginia and other states where Black residents were excluded from state parks entirely, accessible facilities in the national parks presented the only opportunity to engage in outdoor recreation. Charles S. Johnson made this argument in a letter to Cammerer in 1937. Johnson was a noted sociologist, the editor of the National Urban League's journal *Opportunity,* and the first African American president of Fisk University in Nashville, TN. Johnson noted that nearly twenty percent of the population of Tennessee was Black, yet only one percent of recreational areas in the state were available for their use. The practice of racial exclusion not only ignored their privileges as citizens, but also deprived them of the benefits afforded by the parks. Johnson argued that African American citizens were "more urgently in need of wholesome recreational outlets than perhaps any other element." The Roosevelt administration had dedicated its efforts to "the forgotten man," Johnson observed. He urged Cammerer not to forget African American visitors in the national parks and to make "definite and explicit provisions … to insure opportunities for all of the population."[76]

In reply, Cammerer noted that sites had been identified for the development of facilities for African American visitors, but that "the development of these facilities largely follows the demand of people for them." Cammerer suggested that this was a race neutral policy that allowed the NPS to "provide park facilities for all people on exactly the same basis, regardless of race." Planned facilities for African American use had not yet been developed because "there has been, as yet, little demand for facilities for Negro use." Cammerer speculated that this was due to the isolated location of many parks which were "located at some distance from large centers of population" and because of the expense associated with traveling to them.[77] To measure demand, some parks documented the proportion of White and Black visitors who passed through contact stations and their figures bolstered Cammerer's claims. In 1941, the NPS tabulated African American travel along the Blue Ridge Parkway and concluded that fewer than one percent of visitors were Black motorists; similar figures were recorded at Mammoth Cave in Kentucky during the 1940, 1941, and 1942 seasons. At Shenandoah National Park, roughly one percent of visitors to the park in 1939 were African American.[78]

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76 Charles S. Johnson to Cammerer, 23 April 1937, Box 379, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

77 Cammerer to Johnson, 27 May 1937, Box 379, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. See also Young, "A Contradiction in Democratic Government," 658–659.

78 Stanley W. Abbott, Blue Ridge Parkway (BLRI) Acting Superintendent, to NPS Director, 29 May 1942. R. Taylor Hoskins, 3 June 1942, MACA Superintendent, to NPS Director, 3 June 1942, Box 2737, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD; Accommodations for Visitors, Shenandoah National Park, 21 February 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

Cammerer may have also assumed that, like state parks, the national parks in Virginia would be perceived as White spaces and that the number of African American travelers would be minimal. In his correspondence with Director Cammerer, Associate Director A. E. Demaray acknowledged the low numbers of African American visitors in the national parks and conceded that "probably at first there will be a few negroes who will visit." But in 1936 Demaray noted that even the small number of African American visitors who came to the parks would need to be accommodated; they could not be excluded as they were in state parks. The NPS would have to abide by the "separate but equal" principle established by *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). If an African American visitor "comes to the Park he cannot be denied such facilities," Demaray wrote. "He will either have to be placed in the campground where white persons are camping or there must be available a separate camping area for negroes with facilities equally as good as for white persons. I do not see how this can be avoided."[79] By 1938, after the *Gaines* decision, Demaray's analysis of the situation was confirmed by the Supreme Court.

Department of Interior Adviser on Negro Affairs W. J. Trent directly addressed the NPS policy of delaying construction of facilities for African American use in an address to park superintendents in 1939. Trent observed that NPS surveys revealed that Black citizens were underserved by state and local park systems, yet the NPS had demonstrated "little concern over the lack of opportunity for Negroes to utilize facilities of the existing [national] parks." In his remarks at the superintendents' conference, Trent illustrated his familiarity with Cammerer's approach to the issue. "Usually, upon presentation of the idea that it is necessary to provide facilities for Negro use in these parks," Trent observed, "the first reply ready to hand is 'When there is sufficient demand by Negroes for facilities in these areas, then they will be provided.'" The adviser countered that the same principle was not applied to the construction of facilities for White visitors. The NPS's own analysis of the impact of the RDAs suggested that the construction of visitor facilities helped to stimulate demand for and interest in outdoor recreation. While construction of facilities for African American use was delayed, the NPS continued to construct facilities for White visitors under the assumption that the demand for them would materialize once they were completed. "A better example of inconsistency cannot be imagined!" Trent asserted. "Why should any particular racial group be held to different requirements from others?" If the NPS provided African American citizens with access to visitor facilities, Black visitation would rise. "Let it be known . . . that recognition is being taken of their needs and that they as other citizens are invited to enjoy the comforts and privileges of every national park area in the country and there will be increased travel of Negroes to these areas," Trent predicted. "I say open the facilities—and demand will be there."[80]

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79 Demaray to Cammerer, 1 October 1936, Box 17, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

80 W. J. Trent, "The Negro and the National Parks: A Discussion before Superintendents of the National Parks," 1939, Box 10, Entry 766, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD. For more on Trent and his involvement

Trent called on the superintendents assembled to support a policy of nondiscrimination and nonsegregation, but they rejected this proposal. Trent argued that rather than abiding by local law and custom, "Federal agencies should urge and insist that local social patterns be continually liberalized." To do otherwise was to become complicit in the "oppression of minority groups."[81] However, instead of following Trent's lead, the park superintendents at the conference demonstrated their support for existing policy and Cammerer's directive to delay construction of African American facilities "until demand grew for them." The superintendents formally recommended the "control, type and extent of accommodations conform to existing State laws, established customs of adjacent communities, and Negro travel demands." When Trent learned of this recommendation, he warned the Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes that following local custom would inevitably "involve the National Park Service in serious discriminatory practices."[82]

Indeed, the established practice of delaying the construction of African American visitor facilities perpetuated inequality *within* individual parks. Moreover, the strategies adopted from park to park to maintain segregation varied considerably depending on the recognition of existing "demand" for Black outdoor recreation, creating inconsistency *between* Virginia's national parks. Some featured well-developed duplicative facilities, others relied on malleable racial boundaries managed by park rangers, and in a few cases, some parks sought to discourage Black visitation altogether. As the historian Mia Bay has illustrated, these kinds of inconsistencies were a common feature of the segregated travel landscape; "contrary and confusing customs" confounded Black travelers as they sought to navigate through unfamiliar territory.[83]

Restrooms and Laundry Facilities

The debate about the relative demand for visitor facilities influenced the development of planned picnic and camp grounds in the national parks, and shaped contractual relationships with park concessionaires. But racial prohibitions related to the shared use of public restrooms were so prevalent that segregated public restrooms were constructed in southern national parks and national monuments even in the absence of large numbers of African American visitors. The segregation of restrooms—in public as well as private spaces—was a commonplace practice in the Jim Crow South and was frequently defended in the name of public health. "There is one troublesome aspect to the question of making such facilities as

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in the desegregation of national campgrounds and this address, see Young, "A Contradiction in Democratic Government, 661-664.

81 W. J. Trent, "The Negro and the National Parks: A Discussion before Superintendents of the National Parks," 1939, Box 10, Entry 766, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

82 Young, "A Contradiction in Democratic Government," 663–664. Trent to Ickes, 17 March 1939, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

83 P. L. Prattis, as quoted in Mia Bay, *Traveling Black: A Story of Race and Resistance* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021), 6–7.

bathing and toilets available to everyone that has been urged upon me," Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes noted in 1945. "The allegation is made that there is a higher rate of venereal disease among Negroes." Ickes claimed that this insidious racist trope was so widely believed and popularly accepted by White visitors that it complicated the prospect of desegregating restrooms and laundry facilities in the national parks. The secretary even contemplated the establishment of restroom regulations governing the way both Black and White visitors would use comfort stations "which might have the effect of reducing the danger of contacting such diseases."[84] While these regulations were never established, the conversation surrounding them speaks directly to the racist ideology the NPS accommodated through the construction of segregated toilets and laundries.

At Colonial National Monument some of the first permanent structures built in the park were segregated comfort stations. At the Yorktown Sesquicentennial celebration in October 1931, which marked the formal inauguration of Colonial National Monument, five hundred seats in the temporary grandstand were "set apart for the exclusive use of Colored

Figure 22. Sign in Colonial National Monument directing White and Black visitors to segregated comfort stations. Initially, only one restroom facility was provided for African American visitors on Church Street in Yorktown. (Outline of Development, Colonial National Monument, Yorktown, Virginia, 12 July 1933, Box 1946, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.)

84 Ickes to Under Secretary Abe Fortas, 8 August 1945, Box 3837, Entry 749B, RG 48, College Park, MD.

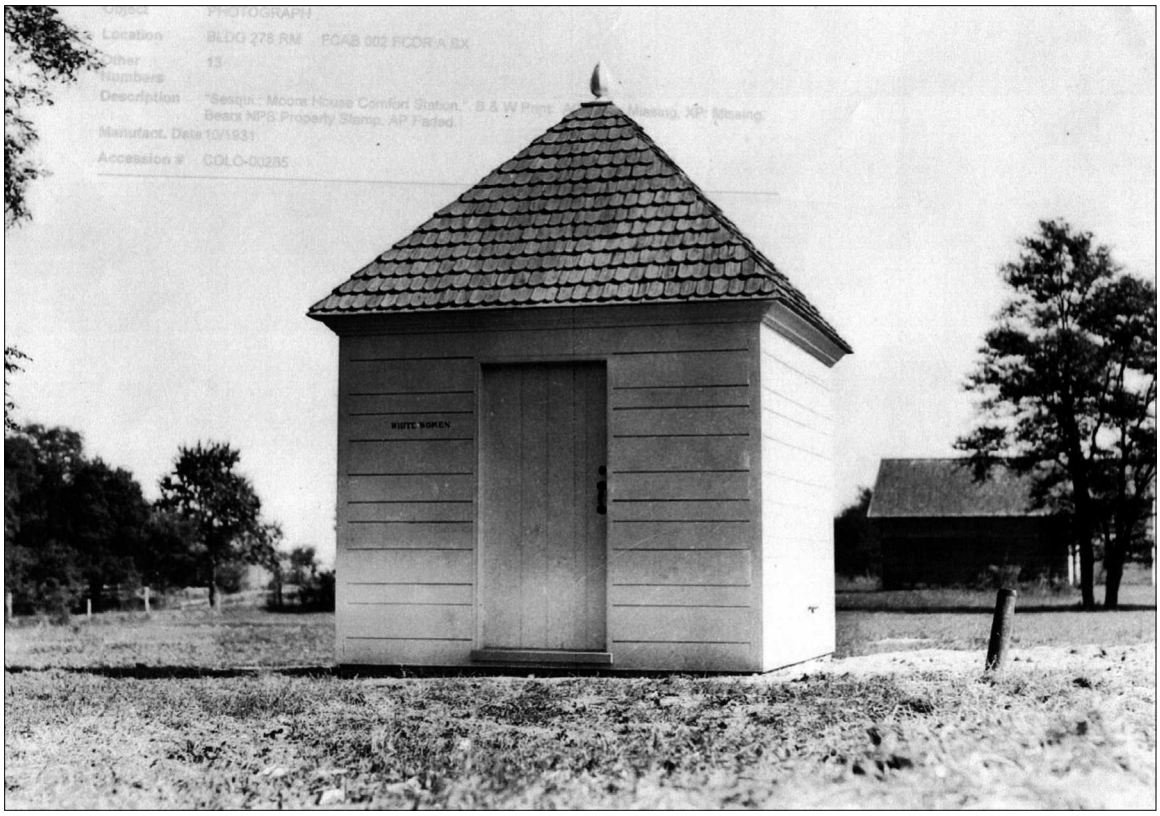

Figure 23. The restricted use of most comfort stations at Colonial National Monument is evident in this image, which clearly designates this comfort station at Moore House for the use of White women. (Image courtesy of Colonial National Historical Park, COLO 112, COLO-00285, October 1931.)

people" and a separate concessions tent was established to provide meals for African American visitors.[85] The NPS estimated that 250,000 people attended the four-day event. Although most accommodations for visitors were temporary, the NPS constructed seven permanent comfort stations in anticipation of their continued use within the park. One of the facilities located on Church Street was designated for African American use. This single comfort station was constructed for half the cost of its White counterparts, even after the finishing work was completed the following year. Comfort stations at the Victory Monument, Moore House, and the celebration field were for the use of White visitors only (see Figures 22 and 23).[86]

Restrooms in other historic areas, including Civil War battlefields, were also segregated. At Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, a new administrative building was constructed with Public Works Administration funding in 1936. Restroom facilities for White visitors were developed in the basement of the building, while those for Black visitors

85 Meeting Minutes of Yorktown Sesquicentennial Association Trustees, 30 June 1931, Box 70, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

86 Outline of Development, Colonial National Monument, 14 July 1933, Box 1946, Entry 10.2; Charles Peterson, Landscape Architect, to NPS Director, 2 December 1930, Box 619, Entry 10.1, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

Figure 24. (Left) The finish on the interior fixtures in this White men's restroom located in the basement of the administrative building at Fredericksburg Battlefield was developed to a higher standard than the restroom provided for African American men adjacent to the service center in the rear of the building. ("Men's Toilet: Administration Building," construction completion photograph, 14 April 1936, Chatham Manor Archives, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, Fredericksburg, VA.)

Figure 25. (Right) The "colored men's" restroom at Fredericksburg Battlefield was adjacent to the service center. The subway tiles on the wall, the concrete floor, and the pressed metal stalls were more utilarian than the facilities provided for White visitors and park staff. ("Colored Men's Toilet: Service Building," construction completion photograph, 14 April 1936, Chatham Manor Archives, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, Fredericksburg, VA.)

were located adjacent to the service center in the back. This distribution of facilities was racially coded, with White guests accommodated within a structure built to mimic an affluent plantation house and Black guests forced to use toilets adjacent to a utility area. The finishes within the restrooms were also different. The White restrooms were fitted with toilet stalls constructed of polished stone, which also ran up the walls, and tiled floors (see Figure 24).[87] The African American restrooms featured toilet stalls made of pressed metal, subway tiles, and a serviceable concrete slab floor (see Figure 25).[88] These kinds of economies reveal how a "Negro" restroom facility, like the comfort station at Colonial, could be constructed for half

87 "Men's Toilet: Administration Building," construction completion photograph, 14 April 1936, Chatham Manor Archives, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, Fredericksburg, VA.

88 "Colored Men's Toilet: Service Building," construction completion photograph, 14 April 1936, Chatham Manor Archives, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, Fredericksburg, VA.

the cost of its White counterpart. They also illustrate the degree to which facilities in southern national parks operated outside of the bounds of the "separate but equal" jurisprudence established by *Plessy v. Ferguson*.

Segregated bathroom facilities even extended to employees' quarters. For example, at George Washington Birthplace National Monument, local African American residents worked as domestic laborers for park staff at their residences. In May 1933, the monument constructed a "small comfort station … in the woods in the rear of the residential area for the use of such colored people as may be working in that section."[89] This facility may have been very rudimentary. In December 1934, Superintendent Hough made a formal request for an appropriation to install two toilets in the basements of employee residences to "help solve the servant problem at the Monument." These facilities were needed to accommodate "colored servants" working for staff, he explained. A note written in the margin approving this proposal did not critique the request, but rather that NPS planners had not anticipated the need to provide segregated facilities for Black domestic staff. "Present buildings very new," it read, "someone should have provided for this it seems."[90] There is no evidence that the internal toilets were installed. The small comfort station in the rear wood would have been an inconvenience for Black workers on the site, and it certainly would not have been conveniently located for African American park visitors.

In Virginia's recreational parks that accommodated day use as well as overnight camping and lodging, the range of facilities available was greater but still separated by race. At Shenandoah National Park in February 1939, the only existing laundry and shower building was reserved for White visitors. The park anticipated constructing five more, with two designated for African American use. Fewer than twenty percent of existing comfort stations in the park met the needs of Black visitors—a proportion the park planned to maintain as additional facilities were constructed. Generally, these restrooms were available at concession buildings and some parking overlooks, in addition to the African American picnic and campground established at Lewis Mountain. Duplicative facilities were not constructed in spaces where African Americans were already excluded, like "White only" picnic grounds.[91]

Even the most rudimentary facilities were segregated. In February of 1939, the Blue Ridge Parkway was less developed than Shenandoah but the six existing pit toilets along the Parkway were for the use of White visitors only. Park staff anticipated building comfort stations, with roughly thirty percent of the proposed stall units designated for African American travelers. When constructed, laundry tub facilities would also be segregated by race.[92] This

89 Superintendent's Monthly Report, May 1933, Box 14, Series 1, George Washington Birthplace National Monument (GEWA) Park Central Files, Colonial Beach, VA. See also, Bruggeman, GEWA Administrative History, 114–115.

90 Hough to NPS Director, 26 December 1934, Box 2220, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

91 Accommodations for Visitors, Shenandoah National Park, 21 February 1939.

92 Accommodations for Visitors, Blue Ridge Parkway, 20 February 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

proposal was refined in consultation with W. J. Trent, Jr., the Department of Interior's Adviser on Negro Affairs. In those areas along the Parkway, like concessions buildings or gas stations, where both Black and White visitors would use the facilities, newly constructed comfort stations would include common entrances. Regardless of race, visitors would enter restrooms marked for men and women with common sinks and urinals, but individual toilet stalls would be reserved for the use of Black or White visitors.[93]

Picnic Areas and Campgrounds

Picnic areas, campgrounds, and parking overlooks were also segregated by race in Virginia's national parks. Formal facilities for African American use were frequently denoted on early planning documents, but the realization of these plans varied from park to park depending on perceptions of demand in the mid-1930s and the availability of funds by the late-1930s. At some parks, completely segregated picnic grounds for the exclusive use of White or Black visitors were developed. At others, use of a single picnic area was formally subdivided with some areas reserved for White use and others for Black use. At other locations, park staff enforced segregation within individual picnic grounds by directing Black visitors to specific sections or tables within them as demand fluctuated. And in at least one park, local practice and park regulations were carefully calibrated to discourage African American visitation entirely.

As noted above, park staff at Shenandoah National Park accommodated Black visitors in picnic areas established for White use when there was not a separate picnic ground for Black motorists yet established in the park. After the *Gaines* decision, park staff in other areas also relied on this approach in those parks where "Negro only" developments had not yet been constructed. For example, along the Blue Ridge Parkway, park planners hoped to develop two picnic area areas for the use of Black motorists. Pine Spur was planned for the exclusive use of African American travelers, while facilities at Rocky Knob would accommodate White and Black visitors in separate sections. However, construction at these areas was not prioritized. In 1939, segregated parking spaces were set aside for Black motorists at both the Cumberland Knob and Rocky Knob overlooks, but there were no picnicking facilities or campgrounds available for their use at either site or anywhere else in the park.[94]

In the early 1940s, Acting Superintendent Stanley W. Abbott modified this policy. Until the planned development at Pine Spur was created, "we must take care of the colored visitor at Smart View and Rocky Knob" in existing picnic areas.[95] "It is important that the Ranger Service show every courtesy to the white and negro visitors," Abbott wrote, "and effort

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93 Demaray to Ickes, 5 May 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

94 Accommodations for Visitors, Blue Ridge Parkway, 20 February 1939.

95 Stanley W. Abbott, BLRI Acting Superintendent, to Ranger Garry, 11 August 1941, Box 2737, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

should be made to keep white and negro visitors reasonably segregated in various use areas, but with the least possible attention being drawn to the problem." At Cumberland Knob, rangers were instructed to direct African American visitors to a small picnic area with five tables was set aside for their use. On crowded days, Black picnickers would be given priority to use the space; otherwise, it could be used by White picnickers as well. Along other parts of the Parkway, sections of established picnic areas were not set aside. Instead, visitors were directed to specific picnic tables at the discretion of park rangers.[96] "It is our practice to have the caretakers or Park Wardens designate picnic units for the use of the Negro park visitors," Abbott noted.[97]

In Shenandoah National Park, Director Cammerer hoped to avoid these kinds of arrangements. As African American visitation to Shenandoah increased in the mid-1930s, Superintendent Lassiter set aside the southern section of Elkwallow Picnic Grounds for the use of African American motorists, successfully accommodating up to two busloads of visitors at a time.[98] But Director Cammerer was not satisfied with this ad hoc arrangement. In July 1937, he observed, "There is growing demand for picnic places for colored people in Shenandoah National Park." The current practice of temporarily accommodating these visitors at "camping places for the white people … is not a good condition," the director asserted. He urged Lassiter to begin to construct a completely separate picnic and campground for African American use before the end of the summer. Cammerer acknowledged that "there will be some criticism by colored people against segregation," but suggested that the NPS would be subject to even more criticism from both Black and White visitors if the current practice continued.[99]

Cammerer hoped to open facilities for Black motorists at Lewis Mountain in the summer of 1937 but development did not proceed as quickly as he desired. In June 1938, Superintendent Lassiter reported that the picnic ground had been successfully graded, fireplaces had been installed, and restroom facilities were nearly complete.[100] But the facilities available were not comparable to those available to White visitors in other parts of the park. The picnic area included no tables and the proposed campground remained undeveloped, as did the planned cabins and lodge to be operated by the park's concessionaire.[101] Nevertheless, instead of being accommodated in other parts of the park, Black travelers were directed to this incomplete space. In the summer of 1939, Sadie Evans Gough traveled with a companion from Washing-

96 Stanley W. Abbott, Memo for the Files, 28 June 1940, Box 2737, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

97 Stanley W. Abbott to NPS Director, 29 May 1942, Box 2737, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

98 Lassiter to Cammerer, 2 August 1937, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

99 Cammerer to Demaray, 24 July 1937, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

100 Reed L. Engle, "Shenandoah Laboratory for Change," *CRM*, 1 (1998), 34.

101 Accommodations for Visitors, Shenandoah National Park, 21 February 1939.

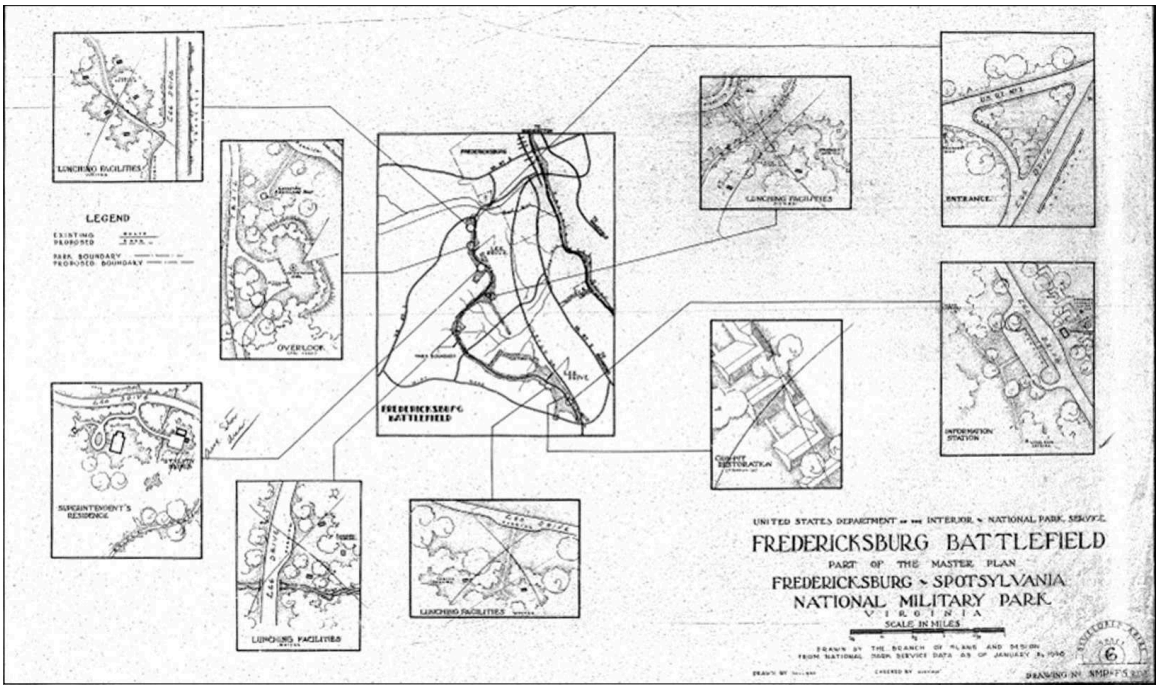

Figure 26. (Above, detail right) The picnic area available for African American visitors at Fredericksburg Battlefield are highlighted on the 1940 master plan. Visitors reached the wooded area by following a path off Pickett's Circle. (Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, 1940 Master Plan, Denver Service Center.)

ton, DC, to Shenandoah. On their arrival, they were informed that there were no overnight accommodations or cabins available for African American tourists, and were directed to the picnic and campgrounds at Lewis Mountain. Unfamiliar with her surroundings, Gough was forced to spend an uncomfortable night in her car in an abandoned parking lot overgrown with grasses.[102] Conditions at the site improved during the 1940 summer season when the campground became operational, and the Virginia Sky-Line Company formally opened a lodge, dining room, and associated cabins for African American visitors.[103]

Segregated picnic areas were also established in historical parks. At Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, lunching facilities were clearly marked as "Negro" or "White" on the 1940 master plan, with picnic areas designated for African American use

102 Sadie Evans Gough to Harold Ickes, Secretary of Interior, 19 June 1939, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

103 Reed L. Engle, "Shenandoah: Laboratory for Change," *CRM*, 1 (1998), 35.

at both the Fredericksburg and Wilderness battlefields (see Figure 26).[104] These picnic areas were developed with CCC labor in 1935, and similar facilities were constructed at Petersburg National Military Park and Richmond Battlefield the following season.[105] The White picnic areas at the Fredericksburg Battlefield were located along Lee Drive and were clearly visible and accessible from the main roadway. In contrast, the African American picnic area was located down a spur road at the end of a parking circle with foliage screening it from view. The placement of this site within the larger park landscape was consistent with NPS planning practices in the RDAs. During World War II, many picnic facilities in historic areas were abandoned as a byproduct of staffing shortages and curtailed resources. After the war, the NPS decided not to expend funds to revive defunct picnic grounds in historic areas, since they attracted local residents who were primarily interested in "picnicking and not history."[106] This shift in policy also coincided with the NPS's turn toward integrating visitor facilities in the parks.

The NPS's response to demonstrated demand for visitor facilities like picnic grounds, camping sites, and opportunities for recreational swimming in historic areas varied according to the race of the prospective visitors. At Colonial National Monument, the river beaches along the Parkway and at Jamestown and Yorktown had been used for recreational swimming, fishing, and boating before the park was formally established. At Yorktown, local White residents continued to make use of the beach, and a picnic area was established adjacent to this site (see Figure 27). Visitors from farther afield expressed interest in camping within the boundaries of the park as well. Colonial National Monument staff, Superintendent Floyd Flickinger, and ECW Field Supervisor H. Reese Smith all called for the establishment of a campground adjacent to the picnic area along the beach.[107] Landscape architects Charles E. Peterson and M.C. Josephson of the Eastern Division of the Branch of Plans and Design thought the proposed site was too narrow, too exposed, and lacked adequate drainage; they preferred a wooded site farther inland.[108] Colonial National Monument staff protested that prospective campers preferred the beach site, and noted that the only alternative available

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104 Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, 1940 master plan, Denver Service Center. The distinction between a "picnic ground" and a "lunching facility" is that the latter included no fireplaces for cooking.

105 Thomas K. Howard, Project Superintendent, to NPS Director, 22 March 1935, Box 2468; FRSP Monthly Narrative Report, July 1935, Box 2469, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. "Park to Develop Picnic Grounds," *Free Lance-Star,* 28 May 1935. RICH Monthly Narrative Report, June 1936, Box 2479; PETE Monthly Narrative Report, June 1936, Box 2470, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

106 Acting Director Hillory A. Tolson, to Region I Director, 23 September 1944, Box 2596c, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

107 Bingham Duncan, Acting Park Historian, to Acting Chief Ranger R. Taylor Hoskins, 25 September 1935; H. Reese Smith, ECW Field Supervisor, to Acting Chief Ranger R. Taylor Hoskins, 26 September 1935; James W. Head, Jr., Associate Engineer, to Acting Chief Ranger R. Taylor Hoskins, 25 September 1935; Report of Taylor Hoskins on Proposed Camp Ground Sites, 25 September 1935; Floyd Flickinger, Colonial (COLO) Superintendent, to NPS Director, 27 September 1935, Box 1949, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

108 Melvin C. Josephson, Assistant Landscape Architect, to Acting Chief Ranger R. Taylor Hoskins, 23 September 1935, Box 1949, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

Figure 27. As depicted here, local White residents continued to frequent Yorktown Beach after the establishment of Colonial National Monument. The NPS sought ways to accommodate this pre-existing recreational use at the historic site, while African American use of a beaches elsewhere in Colonial National Monument and George Washington Birthplace National Monument was discouraged. (Outline of Development, Colonial National Monument, Yorktown, Virginia, 12 July 1933, Box 1946, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.)

for camping inland was a "small hilly lot adjacent to the colored CCC camps." Park Ranger John Gordon Myers noted that he had offered this site to two groups of White visitors—one from California and the other from New Jersey—who "could not be blamed for not wanting to stay at the allocated place." Myers wrote, "It is an outrage that interested visitors should be required to pitch camp in such a place if they wished to stay at all."[109] Here, as elsewhere, the relative merits of the various sites under consideration was not only informed by their utility for their intended purpose, but also by the desire to create and maintain racial separation in the parks.

In contrast to the discussion surrounding recreational use at Colonial, park planners at George Washington Birthplace National Monument sought to discourage pre-existing African American swimming and recreation even as they constructed new facilities to try to

109 Park Ranger John Gordon Myers to COLO Superintendent Floyd Flickinger, 28 March 1935, Box 1949, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

encourage White picnicking and boating. In 1931, park planners noted that White visitors were already traveling to the monument with the intention of picnicking. "Something should be provided for them," recommended Assistant Landscape Architect V. Roswell Ludgate. The Wakefield Association planned to build a structure in the Duck Hall area to provide visitors with meals, overnight accommodations, access to comfort stations, and a small assemblage of souvenirs. Ludgate recommended establishing a picnic ground adjacent to the facility because of its proximity to the water "with attractive views and a cool breeze during the summer months." A picnic ground was established for the use of White visitors along with a pier. In addition to the services provided in the lodge, visitors could also rent small boats to enjoy Pope's Creek.[110]

But in early surveys of the area's recreational potential, Acting Associate Director A. E. Demaray raised concerns about the accommodation of Black visitors. In the summer of 1931, Demaray visited Wakefield and "went down to the old wharf on the Potomac River beyond the burial ground and found colored people bathing there." After making inquiries, Demaray understood that this swimming hole was being used with increasing regularity by local African American residents. He proposed the development of a second recreational area with picnic tables at this location to encourage Black visitors to continue using this site and not the area being developed around Duck Hall.[111]

Park planners stationed at the regional planning office argued against this proposal. Engineer Oliver G. Taylor contended that African American use of the beach was a new development. "When the river frontage was owned by the River Holding Corporation and previously when it was owned by the Latane Brothers, negroes were not allowed to bathe here. Whenever they attempted to do so, Mr. Latane ordered them away." Taylor noted that the beach was used extensively by White residents throughout the area both for recreational swimming and bathing in the absence of plumbing in their own homes. In contrast, the NPS engineer contended that African American residents were not concerned with personal hygiene, and thus, did not need access to the beach. "The colored people do not have the habit of taking baths and they go to the river mostly because they want to do the things white people do," he wrote. This remark revealed more about Taylor's own racial politics than the habits of local African American residents. Nevertheless, Taylor suggested that the local Black population was "wise enough to know that if they can edge in on these bathing places under the Federal Government that they may get them for their exclusive use." Taylor argued that White visitors and local residents would not use an integrated beach, and consequently, if the NPS did not restrict access to the area, he predicted that the swimming hole would become locally defined as an African American beach. Since George Washington Birthplace National Monument could not provide comparable access to a swimming beach at Duck Hall, Taylor

110 Ludgate to Charles Peterson, 14 July 1931; Demaray to Albright, 6 August 1931, Box 591, Entry 10.1, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

111 Demaray to Albright, 6 August 1931, Box 591, Entry 10.1, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

suggested this kind of development would place White visitors at a disadvantage. The NPS engineer acknowledged that "colored people must be given more consideration by the Federal Government than is given them by the state," but insisted, "some way must be found to keep them from using all our best places." Taylor recommended the establishment of a separate bathing area further downstream, and assured the national office that an alternative location "need not be as desirable a location as the one for white people." If a different bathing area for Black visitors could not be established somewhere else along the river front, Taylor maintained that it would be better to prohibit swimming altogether. "We just must in some manner continue to maintain the color line and keep the colored people in their places," he concluded.[112] As historian Andrew Kahrl has noted, across the southeastern US, public officials and private landowners often designated "remote, polluted, dangerous, and wholly inferior stretches of shore as suitable for 'colored' people."[113] Taylor's suggestion that the "best places" be reserved for White visitors, and that one for Black visitors "need not be as desirable" was in keeping with broader regional patterns.

Ultimately, Demaray's proposal to build a picnic area for the use of African American visitors was deferred. The six-year program of development for the site prioritized the construction of the picnic ground at Duck Hall in 1936 and 1937 at a total cost of $800, and an African American picnic ground "for the exclusive use of colored visitors" in 1938 for $300.[114] In 1941, the Duck Hall development was completed, but the proposed facilities at the wharf were still not constructed. Although mentioned in the site's development outline, the national office noted that they were not prioritized or even included on the 1941 master plan or construction program.[115] In his review of the 1941 master plan, Regional Supervisor of Historic Sites Roy Edgar Appleman continued to oppose the construction of a second picnic area at the monument.[116] Two decades later, the site remained undeveloped despite persistent use of the beachfront by African American visitors. A 1961 visitor use study noted the "lack of sanitary facilities," let alone picnic tables, at the site Superintendent Gibbs explained "some of the problems and reasons behind the current status of the beach" to the observers, but the report only alludes to and does not explain the rationale for not providing for recreational use.[117]

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112 Oliver G. Taylor, Engineer in Charge, to Associate Director Demaray, 10 August 1931, Colonial National Historical Park Administrative Files, Box A03, 620-15, COLO, Yorktown, VA.

113 Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*, 14–15.

114 Philip R. Hough, GEWA Superintendent, to NPS Director, 13 May 1933, Box 2219, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

115 Hillory A. Tolson, Acting Associate Director, to Acting Region I Director, 18 June 1941, Box 2219, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

116 Roy Edgar Appleman, Regional Supervisor of Historic Sites, Technical Review of 1941 George Washington Birthplace Master Plan, Box 2219, Entry 10.2, RG 70, NARA, College Park, MD.

117 A Study of Visitor Impressions at George Washington's Birthplace National Monument and Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, April 1961, Box 6, Entry 62, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

In the late 1930s and early 1940, park planners discouraged African American recreational use at George Washington Birthplace National Monument by deprioritizing the construction of a formal picnic ground or designated swimming area. Moreover, the monument's rules and regulations forbade informal use of the site. "Camping, picnicking and bathing are allowed only at localities and during hours designated by the Custodian," they read. African American use of the beach pre-existed the NPS's administration of the site, but was not accommodated in its future development.[118]

Park Concessions

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, segregated concession facilities were constructed in some parks, including historic areas like Colonial and George Washington Birthplace National Monuments, and recreational parks like Shenandoah National Park and the Blue Ridge Parkway. If concessions facilities were provided in association with a recreational area or picnic ground that was already designated for "White" or "Negro" use, the associated concessions were also reserved for the exclusive use of one racial group. The NPS asked concessionaires to provide service to White and Black visitors in areas that were jointly used, like concessions buildings located along heavily trafficked travel routes. However, the amenities available to and services provided for Black and White travelers at these jointly used sites were not equal.

The costs associated with creating duplicative facilities for concessionaires were high. Their facilities involved much more capital investment than the picnic grounds or stand-alone comfort stations operated by the NPS. Initially, the Virginia Sky-Line Company resisted pressure to create concessions for African American visitors at Lewis Mountain in Shenandoah National Park because they did not believe they could be operated at a profit (see chapter four). However, by the 1940 season, Black visitors to Shenandoah National Park could secure overnight lodging in cabins at Lewis Mountain. These facilities, and the associated dining room in the lodge, were designated for the exclusive use of African American visitors, but meals were also served to African American travelers in small sections of the dining rooms at Panorama and Swift Run. Concessionaire T. McCall Frazier later recalled that the Virginia Sky-Line Company agreed to construct these concessions in exchange for the assurance that the dining rooms at Dickey Ridge, Elk Wallow, Skyland, and Big Meadows "would be reserved for the exclusive use of white people."[119] Stand-up lunch counter service was available in most parts of the park with the exception of Skyland. Before the facilities at Lewis Mountain,

118 A. E. Demaray, Acting Associate Director, to Robert P. White, GEWA Acting Custodian, 12 November 1931, Box 2217, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

119 Frazier to Edward D. Freeland, Shenandoah Superintendent, 18 February 1946; Freeland to NPS Director, 18 February 1946, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

Panorama, and Swift Run were completed, Black visitors seeking table service had been served alongside the park's "Negro help" in their quarters.[120]

Along the Blue Ridge Parkway, there was substantial resistance from businesses in surrounding communities about the establishment of concessions within the park that would compete with private interests.[121] The NPS also had difficulty soliciting bids from prospective concessionaires.[122] Consequently, the development of concessions within the park proceeded more slowly.[123] Nevertheless, in the late 1930s, a clear policy was established that would govern the distribution of services in these areas as they were developed. In both Shenandoah National Park and along the Blue Ridge Parkway, the NPS appeared to draw a distinction between formal sit-down dining and informal food service at lunch counters and sandwich shops, which was less rigidly segregated in areas that provided for joint use. In 1939, NPS staff met with Department of Interior Adviser on Negro Affairs W. J. Trent and agreed that "gasoline, service, and eating facilities located close to the parkway road will in all cases provide for both White and Negro use." The parkway's master plan anticipated the construction of such facilities at Smart View, Rocky Knob, and Bluff Park. However, the following "provisions" were attached to joint use of these areas. No division of service would be made between Black and White visitors at gasoline stations, sandwich shops, lunch counters, or in the sale of souvenirs. However, separate dining rooms would segregate Black and White diners for more formal meals both inside concessions buildings and outside on terraces. As previously noted, comfort stations within concession facilities would be jointly used by all travelers, but individual toilets stalls would be designated for the use of White or Black visitors on their interior.[124]

At Colonial National Monument, a concession operated by Colonial Park Company, Inc. opened at Jamestown in 1936, selling sandwiches, pastries, drinks, and ice cream.[125] Although no correspondence was uncovered that directly addressed the service provided to African American visitors at this facility, the policies established at Shenandoah and Blue Ridge Parkway might suggest that Black travelers were able to order food from the limited

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120 Accommodations for Visitors, Shenandoah National Park, 21 February 1939; Demaray to Cammerer, 25 March 1939, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

121 For example, Chas. E. Ray, Chair of North Carolina National Park Parkway and Forests Development Commission to Congressman Monroe M. Redden, 3 December 1949, Box 3, Entry 61, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

122 A. E. Demaray, Acting NPS Director, to Secretary of Interior, 26 December 1941, Box 2745, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

123 As late as 1949, the only concessions operating along the parkway were "a sandwich shop at Cumberland Knob, and a coffee shop, limited sleeping accommodations, and a service station at the Bluffs," (Hillory A. Tolson, Acting NPS Director, to Congressman C.B. Deane, 21 October 1949, Box 3, Entry 61, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD).

124 A. E. Demaray, NPS Acting Director, to Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes, 5 May 1939; Stanley W. Abbott, BLRI Acting Superintendent, Memo for Files, 28 June 1940, Box 2737. Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

125 Schedule of Basic Rates, Colonial Park Company, Inc., COLO, 1940 Season; Newton B. Drury, NPS Director, to Secretary of Interior, 17 September 1942, Box 1989, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

menu. On the other hand, in the absence of a direct imperative from the NPS to do so, the local concessionaire might also have refused service. With decreased recreational travel to the parks during World War II, the sandwich shop at Jamestown Island closed.[126]

In the wake of the war, and with the inauguration of the NPS's policy of providing integrated service at concessions, Colonial National Historical Park once again considered the possibility of establishing informal dining facilities at Yorktown Beach and Swan Tavern. In 1957, Colonial Superintendent Stanley Abbott openly speculated about whether the park would be able to secure a concessionaire "under current Federal policy." As the NPS contemplated the provision of light refreshments at Swan Tavern, he believed "the problem of integration" would restrict their ability to find a concessionaire.[127] At Jamestown, the NPS had no interest in refurbishing the old concession building after the war. In 1949, staff at Colonial opened up a conversation with the APVA about the possibility of selling light refreshments in addition to souvenirs on the part of the island under their administrative control.[128] A concession facility operated by the APVA during the 1950s almost certainly would have provided segregated service. Although the APVA employed African American caretakers like Sam Robinson to interpret the churchyard for visitors, official guidelines barred groups of African American tourists. "Negro excursions or picnic parties are not admitted," they read.[129]

At George Washington Birthplace National Monument, a concessionaire operated the Log House Tea Room at Duck Hall. In addition to meals, rooms were available for overnight travelers. NPS records indicate that temporary employees described as "unattached men" also boarded permanently at the site, with reduced rates for room and board.[130] The Duck Hall recreational area was implicitly designated for "white use," in contrast to the proposed (but never constructed) recreational area for "colored use" along the Potomac. Since this facility provided sit-down dining and overnight accommodations, it only served White patrons. In 1938 for example, a visiting group of African American school children was denied service at the site. Their chaperone reported that the group was stiffly informed that the Tea Room did not serve "soft drinks or ice cream," but that they could get both with takeaway service at

126 L. R. O'Hara to J.C. Harrington, COLO Superintendent, 10 March 1944; Memorandum of the Secretary of Interior, 2 August 1945, Box 1989, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

127 Stanley Abbott, COLO Superintendent, to Mr. Vint, 22 August 1955, Box 990, Entry 11, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. Superintendent Stanley Abbott had helped to establish the plans for accommodating Black travelers along the Blue Ridge Parkway before the war and finished his career at Colonial.

128 Thomas J. Allen, Regional Director, to Ellen M. Bagby, Chair of APVA Jamestown Committee, 30 March 1949; Elbert Cox, Associate Regional Director, to Congressman Schuyler Otis Bland, 1 April 1949 Box 1989, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

129 James M. Lindgren, *Preserving the Old Dominion: Historic Preservation and Virginia Traditionalism* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), 109–110. See also Richard T. Couture, *To Preserve and Protect: A History of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities* (Dallas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1984), 83–84, 116.

130 Philip R. Hough, GEWA Superintendent, to NPS Director, 17 January 1935, Box 2224; Hough to Director, 31 January 1935, Box 2224; Hough to Director, 13 March 1933, Box 2225; GEWA Log House Tea Room, Schedule of Basic Rates for the 1940 Season, Box 2225, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

the Post Office on-site, a statement that she suggested was nothing more than a thinly veiled attempt to turn them away from the concession's dining room.[131] Indeed, the concessionaire's 1936 contract specifically lists selling ice cream and soft drinks among the services to be rendered, and a menu provided by the operator of the concession in 1940 indicates that a variety of beverages and ice cream were on offer at the Tea House.[132] If the refreshments on offer at the Post Office were inadequate, African American travelers and local residents could also find food and lodging at Black-owned businesses located near the park's approach road. Although these businesses undoubtedly provided needed services, Superintendent Philip R. Hough described them as "unsightly" and "of questionable character" and actively sought their removal.[133]

The availability of travel services immediately outside of the parks was a pressing concern for Black travelers if they were not provided within the parks. Concessions were not operative in the Civil War battlefields, for example, because Coordinating Superintendent Branch Spalding felt that local restaurants and hotels adequately served the needs of the public and believed that on-site concessions would undercut the "dignity" of the battlefields.[134] Although park planners generally avoided developing concessions within parks if they believed visitors could be served by local businesses, it is important to note that the decision *not* to develop concessions had a disproportionate impact on Black visitors. Black travelers were often denied access to roadside eateries, accommodations at motels and hotels, and service at gas stations.[135] If these amenities were not available inside or immediately outside of a park, or if they were not clearly advertised, it could have the effect of suppressing African American visitation. In 1956, Dr. DeHaven Hinkson, a prominent African American physician in Philadelphia, reported that he had decided not to motor along the Blue Ridge Parkway with his wife for precisely this reason. "[We] were reluctant not knowing what fate we would meet for overnight accommodations and meals with privately owned motels," he wrote, and urged the Department of Interior to build more concessions along the parkway itself "since customs south of the Mason and Dixon Line would leave colored motorist tourists without these comforts."[136]

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131 Sister M. Dominica to Arno Cammerer, NPS Director, 15 June 1938, Box 2, Series 1, GEWA Park Central File, Colonial Beach, VA.

132 Mrs. Henry A. Mason, George Washington Birthplace National Monument, 1 November 1935 to 31 October 1936 Contract, Box 2224, Entry 10.2, RG 79; Mrs. Henry A. Mason, George Washington Birthplace National Monument Log House Team Room, Schedule of Basic Rates and Menu for the 1940 Season, Entry 10.2, Box 2225, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

133 Hough to Cammerer, 24 May 1937, Box 2219, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

134 Branch Spalding, VA Battlefields Coordinating Superintendent, to NPS Director, 29 July 1938, Box 1989, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

135 For more on racial discrimination and travel services see Mia Bay, *Traveling Black* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021), 109–110, 129–141.

136 DeHaven Hinkson, MD, to Elmer Bennet, Department of Interior, 21 December 1956, Box 102, RG 3, BLRI Archive, Asheville, VA.

Unequal Development

Throughout the 1930s, the development of segregated visitor facilities in the southern national parks was the NPS's established policy. Outlined in memoranda and planning documents, this policy was supported by the director and other officials in the national office, endorsed by local park superintendents, and implemented by park planners and landscape architects. NPS administrators maintained that segregated visitor facilities were provided to comply with local law and custom, and to accommodate the preferences of both Black and White visitors despite growing piles of correspondence which revealed that African Americans were not satisfied with the services available in the national parks.

In Virginia, while there was no formal statute that mandated the segregation of parks, local custom was just as effective and the state park system excluded Black visitors entirely until the Virginia Department of Conservation and Development was pressured to develop a park for African American use in response to a lawsuit in 1948. In areas under the NPS's administrative control in the commonwealth, the agency accommodated this state preference for total racial exclusion in a few wayside parks established as part of the RDA program. However, generally speaking, the NPS planned for the development of duplicative facilities. In Virginia's large RDAs intended to serve the needs of low-income urban populations, organized campgrounds were developed for African American use even over the objections of local officials. But in the national parks themselves, Director Cammerer did not support the construction of facilities planned for African American use unless there was demonstrated demand. In several parks, small numbers of Black visitors were accommodated within picnic grounds intended for White use. In these spaces, local superintendents expected park rangers to manage the interactions between Black and White visitors and to maintain racial separation. In other parks, with higher numbers of African American visitors or more frequent "demand" for equitable facilities through letters of complaint, a wider range of duplicative facilities were constructed. In all parks in the state established before World War II, segregated restrooms were provided as a matter of course.

The uneven development of facilities for African American use in the national parks throughout Virginia created a landscape that was decidedly separate and unequal, and difficult for Black visitors to navigate. When transitioning from Skyline Drive in Shenandoah National Park to the Blue Ridge Parkway, for example, the segregation practices operative in these two national parks in 1940 differed considerably. In Shenandoah, a segregated picnic, campground, and lodge at Lewis Mountain was designated for African American use and sit-down dining service was available at two other developed areas. Black visitors could secure stand-up lunch counter service at most developed areas in the park. In contrast, along the Blue Ridge Parkway, planned "Negro only" developed areas had not yet been constructed but Black visitors were guided by park rangers toward designated sections of existing picnic grounds. These inconsistencies were complicated by the NPS's desire not to call attention to its policy of racial segregation and its efforts to minimize racial designations on visitor guides and directional signs. The uncertainty associated with traveling through this ambiguous

landscape almost certainly depressed African American visitation. Although NPS administrators who sought to maintain the status quo argued that their policies merely responded to predetermined demand, in reality, NPS policy actively suppressed demand by denying Black visitors unrestricted access to outdoor recreation in the national parks.

CHAPTER FOUR

Civil Rights and Desegregation

In October 1938, a letter from Clyde C. McDuffie criticizing segregation in Shenandoah National Park landed on Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes' desk. McDuffie explicitly asked for his letter to be directed to the secretary, not only to NPS Director Arno B. Cammerer, and requested that any reply be made above the secretary's signature. McDuffie was a Washington, DC, resident and worked as a teacher and administrator in DC's prestigious Black Dunbar High School. His specific request suggests he was familiar with the workings of the federal bureaucracy and perhaps even Director Cammerer's reluctance to equalize facilities for African American park visitors in the absence of documented demand. As will be discussed in the pages below, there is evidence that Adviser on Negro Affairs W. J. Trent had a history of prompting peers and colleagues in civil rights organizations to draft letters of complaint which he could use to stimulate further conversation and debate within the Department of Interior.[1] If he, or another official in the secretary's office, helped to direct McDuffie's request, it had its intended effect. McDuffie's letter launched an internal re-investigation of segregation policy in the southern national parks in 1938 and 1939.

Clyde McDuffie did not ask Secretary Ickes to provide better or more equitable facilities for Black citizens but to abolish the practice of segregation in the southern national parks altogether. He observed that during his recent trip to national parks in the West, there had been no sign of segregation. And despite the fact that visitors from all over the United States, including the South, traveled to western parks, he had not experienced any discrimination during his visit. In contrast, immediately upon entering Shenandoah National Park in Virginia he received a map directing him to the facilities provided for African American travelers at Lewis Mountain. "Such a gratuitous insult, slapping an American citizen in the face, immediately tends to destroy for him the majestic beauties of the Park," McDuffie wrote. "The natural psychological effect of that sentence is to make him feel he is not welcome in this United States National Park, purchased and maintained by *all* the citizens of the United States." Even at the most rudimentary conveniences and comfort stations, segregation signs affronted and insulted Black visitors.

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1 For example, see Trent's correspondence with Walter White, Executive Secretary of the NAACP, discussed in further detail below. Trent to White, 30 January 1940; Trent to White, 14 February 1940, Box 445, Part II:A General Office File, 1940-1955, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

McDuffie had not expected to encounter segregation in Shenandoah, not only because of his previous experience in the West, but because it was a *national* park. "Before I took the trip, I thought that I was going to visit Federal Territory where the 'public policy' and discriminatory laws of the State of Virginia did not prevail," the teacher wrote. The United States granted protection and guaranteed the civil liberties of citizens at its embassies while traveling abroad. Surely, he suggested, the same principle should apply in the national parks in the southern states. "I maintain that the Shenandoah National Park is as much Federal Territory as land purchased and owned by the United States anywhere; that the United States is greater than the Commonwealth of Virginia; that the laws of the Federal Government thereby apply to the Federal owned Shenandoah National Park," McDuffie asserted. The individuals responsible for perpetuating segregation within the park's boundaries were violating "the spirit of our Constitution." In closing, McDuffie called on the secretary to take steps to abolish "this un-American, un-democratic, and un-constitutional discrimination" within the southern national parks.[2]

McDuffie's letter, and his request for a reply from the Secretary of Interior himself, prompted an internal re-evaluation of the practice of segregation in national parks in Virginia and elsewhere. Although Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes would ultimately decide to "generally abide" by the local laws and customs of the state, this internal inquiry planted the seeds of future change as advocates for African American civil rights within the Department strove to overturn established policy. In 1939, Ickes inaugurated an experiment with integration in Shenandoah National Park at a single picnic ground. Gradually, this experiment expanded to include all picnic and campgrounds in the southern states, and by 1945, Ickes formally amended federal regulations prohibiting discrimination in the national parks.

In part, this decision was motivated by the appeals of African American visitors, as well as Ickes' own interest in advancing African American civil rights and the legal arguments marshalled by the Department of Interior's solicitor's office. But arguably, it was also motivated by the same fiscal considerations that had stimulated discussion about the inequities in organized camping facilities within the RDAs. The shortfall of funding, and the impossibility of equalizing recreational opportunities within the parks, prompted serious questions about the constitutionality of the NPS's practices. While the NPS protected its own interest when it responded to letters of complaint about conditions in the RDAs by noting that these parks would be turned over to state agencies for permanent maintenance, the same could not be said of the national parks and monuments themselves. With the advent of World War II, NPS funding was curtailed even further and the CCC was dissolved. The most cost effective, and perhaps the only way, to address the separate and unequal landscape within the southern national parks was by integrating available facilities.

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2 Clyde C. McDuffie to Harold Ickes, Secretary of Interior, 21 October 1938, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

Solicitor's Legal Review

After receiving Clyde McDuffie's letter, Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes forwarded it both to the NPS and his solicitor's office for consideration and review. He asked officials in both offices to draft a letter of reply. The letter drafted by the NPS defended existing policy. Solicitor Margold acknowledged that the "National Park Service feels strongly on this matter," but found himself "unable to subscribe to the doctrine that segregation should be continued" and drafted an alternative advising McDuffie that segregation of the races in Shenandoah National Park would be discontinued. Margold appointed Phineas Indritz, a member of his staff, to prepare a memorandum on the constitutionality of segregation as practiced in the southern national parks and the mechanisms through which the secretary could retain, modify, or abandon the practice altogether.

Assistant Solicitor Phineas Indritz affirmed many of the general statements of principle outlined in McDuffie's original letter. The NPS had adopted Virginia's practice of racial segregation despite the fact that the park operated under the "exclusive jurisdiction of the Federal Government" and was established "for the benefit of the entire people of the United States." Indritz supplied a copy of the map referenced in McDuffie's letter, and noted that African American visitors (with the exception of "maids, chauffeurs, and other colored help") were routinely denied service at concessions operated by the Virginia Sky-Line Company. As McDuffie had noted, comfort stations were segregated. Indritz reported that separate restrooms were provided for White men and White women throughout the park, but in many locations "colored" visitors regardless of sex were provided with a single restroom for joint use.[3]

Indritz reviewed the letters of complaint the NPS had received about these conditions and their letters of reply. A. E. Demaray's response to L. E. Wilson in 1936 (see chapter three) was highlighted as an example of how the "National Park Service has responded to these protests in evasive fashion." Indritz rejected Demaray's assertion that the segregated facilities Wilson objected to were not "evidence of or intention toward race separation in the park." In his initial draft of his memoranda, Indritz wrote, "A statement that separate facilities for the two races is not to be regarded as evidence of race separation is ridiculous on its face. It is an insult to the intelligence of the inquirer." Demaray's reply to Wilson was "incomprehensible."[4] Later, Indritz toned down his critique of the NPS administrator by reframing Demaray's reasoning as at least "highly questionable."[5]

The assistant solicitor went on to refute many of the arguments that had been advanced to defend the policy of segregation in the southern national parks. NPS Director

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3 Indritz to Margold, 12 January 1939, marked final copy, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

4 Indritz to Margold, 12 January 1939, marked 1st draft, unsatisfactory to Secretary, rewritten, Box 8, Entry 810, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

5 Indritz to Margold, 12 January 1939, marked final copy.

Arno B. Cammerer frequently defended current practice by citing the small number of Black visitors who traveled to the parks. Indritz argued that low visitation was "not a valid *reason* for discrimination and segregation." He wrote, "People in search of recreation do not care to visit where they know beforehand that they will be given none of the accommodations and services accorded to others, and will be constantly subjected to ignominious embarrassment." He also rejected Cammerer's assertion that Black visitors preferred segregation. Providing equal access to facilities in the parks did not require African American visitors to associate with White visitors, or vice versa. "Negroes can huddle in a corner by themselves if they care to," Indritz maintained, "but they should have a free choice in the matter as have other groups." The assistant solicitor also dismissed claims that park concessions could not be operated profitably if service was integrated and the contention that racial violence would erupt in the southern national parks if established policy was altered.[6]

In a series of recommendations emphatically supported by Solicitor Nathan Margold, Indritz called for the immediate abandonment of segregation in NPS facilities like comfort stations, picnic grounds, and parking overlooks, as well as dining, lodging, and gasoline services provided by concessionaires. The United States was not obligated to adopt Virginia's laws and customs in its national parks. Shenandoah National Park was maintained with tax appropriations collected from all citizens, regardless of race. Visitors from throughout the country came to enjoy the area's scenic beauty. Current practice within the park, Indritz argued, "enforced Virginia policy upon non-Virginians, in a territory which does not belong to Virginia." Virginia had ceded jurisdiction of the park to the federal government and its laws did not apply within its boundary. Nothing prohibited the Department of Interior and the NPS from "exercising discretion in the regulation of racial relations within the Shenandoah National Park."[7]

The assistant solicitor pointed to a variety of mechanisms that would help effect this change. These included changes to park literature and local practices. For example, Indritz argued that rather than distributing literature like guide maps and pamphlets with language endorsing segregation, "denial of equal privileges on a racial basis should be declared to be contrary to the policy of the Department of Interior." Indritz noted that a change in policy might be subverted by local staff and also advised that procedures be put in place to "prevent evasion of this policy by personnel unsympathetic toward democratic practices." In relation to park concessions, Indritz pointed to precedent in Public Works Administration contracts (also administered by Secretary Ickes) which prohibited discrimination in employment. Future contracts with park concessionaires could include both a nondiscrimination and nonsegregation clause. Concessionaires who did not comply would forfeit their contract after being provided with due process. However, the assistant solicitor underscored the point that Ickes could enforce a nondiscrimination and nonsegregation policy at will, since standard

6 Indritz to Margold, 12 January 1939, marked final copy.

7 Indritz to Margold, 12 January 1939, marked final copy.

concessions contracts included language which recognized the secretary's "general powers of supervision, regulation, and control." Indritz urged immediate action. "The sooner the segregation policy is abandoned, the easier it will be to abandon it," he wrote.[8]

In the initial draft of his memoranda, Indritz compared existing practice in the southern national parks to the policies of Nazi Germany, and described the NPS's defense of segregation as "absurd, illogical, and unsound policy." Although the assistant solicitor acknowledged that discrimination against African Americans had a long history in the United States, he argued that a distinction should be observed between racial discrimination practiced by private individuals and by the federal government. He maintained that American public opinion generally supported the fair and equitable treatment of citizens by the federal government, and that discrimination in the national parks was an "an insult to the majority of the American people who are thereby told that *their* Government sanctions such discrimination within federal areas." Popular disapproval of Nazi Germany's treatment of minority populations illustrated that the public understood the danger of "governmental distinctions based on anthropological misconceptions." Although the Secretary of Interior had frequently made public statements decrying segregation as an abridgement of constitutional principles, Indritz boldly asserted that "the practices now espoused by the National Park Service under the name of Secretary Harold L. Ickes are essentially those practiced by Hitler and his cohorts in Darkest Germany."[9]

Secretary Ickes evidently took offense at this comparison of his administration to Hitler's Germany. After reviewing the document, he told Indritz's supervisor that the draft indicated that the newest member of the solicitor's office had "more zeal than sound discretion." In its original form, Ickes wrote, "it is an unfortunate document to have prepared for the files of this Department." Ickes urged Margold to help Indritz understand that "an administrative officer cannot abdicate his reason to his sentiments, even if his sentiments are high and noble." Ickes promoted a more gradual and moderate approach to addressing racial injustice. "My own feeling is that I have succeeded in accomplishing a great deal for the Negroes, or rather in helping them to accomplish a great deal for themselves, by carefully refraining from getting so far in advance of the procession that they become targets and not part of the procession," he wrote.[10] Margold passed this advice on to his subordinate and Indritz removed the "irrelevant and indiscreet" portions of his draft, moderating his direct criticism of NPS officials and eliminating the comparison to Nazi Germany. However, the substance of Indritz's recommendations and Margold's endorsement of them remained unchanged.[11]

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8 Indritz to Margold, 12 January 1939, marked final copy.

9 Indritz to Margold, 12 January 1939, marked 1st draft, unsatisfactory to Secretary.

10 Ickes to Margold, 25 January 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

11 Indritz to Margold, 12 January 1939, marked 1st draft; Indritz to Margold, 12 January 1939, marked final copy; Margold to Ickes, 17 January 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B; Margold to Ickes, 6 February 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

Solicitor Nathan Margold had previously worked with the NAACP, outlining a strategy for attacking the separate but equal doctrine established under *Plessy v. Ferguson* in the courts. While *Plessy* still stood, from Margold's perspective, the legal questions involved were not complicated: The *policy* of segregation in Shenandoah and other southern national parks was not unconstitutional. "Segregation, as proposed by the National Park Service, is constitutional and otherwise legal provided that the facilities available to members of each race are in all respects equal," he wrote. However, Margold observed, segregation as *practiced* in the parks was demonstrably unequal and was vulnerable to legal challenge. In Shenandoah National Park, the Solicitor noted that "facilities for colored people are not as numerous, as adequate, as appealing or as well cared for as are those made available for whites." Even if facilities could be equalized, Margold called for the abandonment of the NPS's segregation policy. "The Park is maintained from public funds for the benefit of the public generally and, in those circumstances, I can see no possible justification for segregating various elements of the public." Reversing course would be entirely consistent with other efforts by the Roosevelt administration and Secretary Ickes himself to address discrimination. If Ickes wanted to address this inequity there was no legal obstacle to completely abolishing segregation in the national parks. He was "not bound by either the laws or customs of the State of Virginia."[12] If the secretary was concerned about adverse reaction to a change in policy—of getting too far in advance of the procession—Margold proposed a middle ground in an illustration of his own "discretion" and discernment. "To try the non-segregation policy in a border southern state such as Virginia would, in my judgement, be a proper experiment as well as a justified initial step to take in introducing a non-segregation policy into the southern areas," Margold suggested. "I believe the step would not be too bold."[13]

While developing his brief for the Secretary of Interior, Margold had consulted with Adviser on Negro Affairs W. J. Trent. Trent also conferred with Ickes directly. He forwarded the secretary his address to national park superintendents, where he had called for the elimination of discrimination. "I concur emphatically in any recommendation looking toward the abolition of the United States Government of any policy of segregation and discrimination based on color, race or creed in Federal areas," Trent wrote.[14] The adviser acknowledged that the park superintendents had rejected his recommendations after they were presented, but argued that their position was based on the erroneous "assumption that public opinion in the southern section will accept no other arrangement." Trent urged Secretary Ickes to act boldly and not to be deterred by resistance that may or may not materialize. "It seems pertinent to point out that public reaction to any innovation in social institutions or procedures can never be ascertained *a priori*," he wrote. "Almost every innovation in custom has been resisted at first by those who would maintain the *status quo*." However, from Trent's perspective,

12 Margold to Ickes, 17 January 1939.

13 Margold to Ickes, 6 February 1939.

14 Trent to Ickes, 18 January 1939, Box 10, Entry 766, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

maintaining the status quo was not a tenable option. To continue to follow local custom and maintain inequitable facilities would "involve the National Park Service in serious discriminatory practices."[15]

Collecting Statistics on Conditions

Administrators in the NPS refuted certain elements of the brief prepared by the solicitor's office. After reviewing the memorandum prepared by Phineas Indritz where his communications with Black visitors had been called into question, Associate Director A. E. Demaray questioned Indritz's conclusions about the availability of facilities for African American travelers in Shenandoah National Park.[16] While completing his investigation, Indritz had spoken to Superintendent J. R. Lassiter directly but the superintendent indicated that the assistant solicitor had several particulars wrong. Lassiter refuted the assertion that Black men and women were forced to share common restrooms, or that the facilities provided at Lewis Mountain were "inferior every respect to similar facilities provided for the white people." He noted that the blueprints for comfort stations, picnic tables, fireplaces, drinking fountains and the like, were standardized throughout the park. While Lewis Mountain was not as large as many of the White recreational areas in Shenandoah, Lassiter maintained that this was only because "it is not felt that facilities of equal size should be provided for a group which constitutes less than one percent of our total visitors."[17]

In February 1939, Ickes charged First Assistant Secretary E. K. Burlew with collecting statistics about conditions in the southern national parks that could be used to ascertain whether the facilities provided were or were not equal. As these materials were collected, Burlew also sent inquiries to Virginia Senators Harry Byrd and Carter Glass to solicit their opinion about a potential change in policy.[18] "A problem has arisen in the development and administration of the Shenandoah National Park on which we like to have the opinions of the Senators from Virginia before taking action," Burlew wrote. Currently, the NPS abided by the laws and customs of the state of Virginia in relation to racial segregation, just as it followed other state "rules, regulations and customs wherever it is not inconsistent with Federal law and policy to do so." However, the first assistant secretary noted, "numerous and well-formulated protests" had raised questions about the policy of segregation in the park: "They stress that racial discrimination should not be practiced by the Federal Government as such, in an area under its exclusive jurisdiction, maintained by Federal funds for the benefit of all people

15 Trent to Ickes, 17 March 1939, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

16 Demaray to First Assistant Secretary E. K. Burlew, 11 February 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

17 Lassiter to NPS Director, 8 February 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

18 Burlew to Demaray, 13 February 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

of the United States." Burlew went on to summarize the legal analysis of the solicitor's office and underscored the Secretary of Interior's power to take decisive action. He acknowledged that segregation of the parks was constitutional as long as the facilities provided were equal, but suggested that the Department of Interior could also abandon the practice and exercise its own discretion since the park operated under the federal government's exclusive jurisdiction.[19]

First Assistant Secretary Burlew asked the senators to share their views about how the NPS might proceed and expressed interest in their "considered judgement." Carter Glass summarily refused to endorse any proposed change in policy. "From your letter," he wrote, "it is obvious that you are familiar with the segregation laws of the State of Virginia. Of course I completely approve of these laws; and if the Interior Department desires to disregard them, either in fact or in spirit, it will have to take full responsibility for any such remarkable proceeding."[20] Harry Byrd informed Burlew that his office had not received any complaints about conditions in the park, and asked the first assistant secretary to share the "source of the numerous and well-formulated protests that you state have been made to you." If the NPS changed course, Byrd intimated that the Department of Interior would be violating the spirit of an agreement made while he was governor. "It was agreed that all laws governing the State of Virginia would be in effect within the Park area," he wrote.[21]

Meanwhile, NPS administrators moved quickly to comply with First Assistant Secretary E. K. Burlew's request for statistical data about the facilities available for Black travelers. H. Thompson, chief of landscape planning, surveyed the facilities available for African American citizens in those areas of the United States where segregation was established practice. Since the parks were in various stages of development, Thompson also provided information about proposed facilities that had not yet been constructed.[22] Burlew rejected this original list since it only provided information about the facilities available for Black visitors, but did not provide comparable information about those available for White use. Moreover, the information provided only gestured to the type of accommodations that were available, but was not fine-grained enough to compare the scope, size, or number of the facilities provided for Black and White visitors.[23] The national office did not have this kind of detailed information at hand. While Thompson's original list included both national parks and national military parks, the NPS called on superintendents at Shenandoah, Mammoth Cave, and Great Smoky Mountains National Parks, as well as the Blue Ridge Parkway to compile concrete statistical data down

19 Burlew to Glass, 6 March 1949; Burlew to Byrd, 6 March 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

20 Glass to Burlew, 7 March 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

21 Byrd to Burlew, 9 March 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

22 H. Thompson, Landscape Division Chief, to Chief of Planning, 24 January 1939, Box 379, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

23 Burlew to Demaray, 30 January 1939; Thompson to Chief of Planning, 4 February 1939, Box 379, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

to the level of toilet stalls, parking spaces, dining room seats, and picnic tables designated for White, Black, and joint use in the areas under their purview. The national office also asked superintendents to provide contextual information about the relative percentage of Black and White visitors to their parks.[24]

When compiled, these statistics illustrated that the facilities provided for Black and White visitors in the southern national parks were not equal. For example, in Shenandoah National Park, the picnic and campground at Lewis Mountain was not as fully developed as Superintendent Lassiter had suggested in his defense of policies and procedures in the park. While there were fireplaces available, there were no picnic tables or available camping sites. The proposed lodge, cabins, and dining room had not yet been constructed by the Virginia Sky-Line Company. African American visitors could secure meals at some lunch counters. For more formal meals, they were served in staff dining rooms with the "Negro help."[25] At Mammoth Cave National Park, there were no cabins, camps sites, or laundry buildings available for African American use. Only three toilet stalls to the "rear of Mammoth Cave Hotel" were provided for Black visitors in the entirety of the park. As in Shenandoah National Park, African American travelers were served in the "Negro employees' dining room" or they could eat their own meals at a small number of picnic tables reserved for their use.[26] In Great Smoky Mountains, pit latrines were generally not segregated unless they were associated with picnic areas already designated for the use of specific racial groups, but more modern conveniences were. There were no camp sites, cabins, hotel rooms, or laundry facilities available for Black use. African American visitors also had no access to dining room or lunch counter service.[27] Along the Blue Ridge Parkway, White visitors had access to picnic units, camp sites, trailer units, and pit toilets, but Black visitors did not.[28]

The tabulation of "proposed" facilities, in comparison to the tabulation of "existing" facilities, indicated that plans had been developed to address some of these inequities, but even then, the facilities planned for African American use were fewer than those proposed for White travelers and were isolated in specific parts of the parks. However, given Director Cammerer's policy of only constructing facilities when there was documented demand, the low numbers of Black visitors reported by the parks suggested that the proposed camp sites, dining rooms, and cabins might never be realized on the landscape. Shenandoah reported that fewer than one percent of its visitors were African American; Great Smoky Mountains stated

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24 Demaray to Superintendent Eakin, 10 February 1939, Box 379, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

25 Accommodations for Visitors, Shenandoah National Park, 21 February 1939.

26 Accommodations for Visitors, Mammoth Cave National Park, 3 March 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

27 Accommodations for Visitors, Great Smoky Mountains, 3 March 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

28 Accommodations for Visitors, Blue Ridge Parkway, 20 February 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

that 0.18 percent of its visitors were African American; and Mammoth Cave estimated that only five hundred of over 120,000 visitors during the 1938 travel year were African American.[29]

In correspondence with NPS Director Arno B. Cammerer in February 1939, Associate Director Demaray urged Cammerer to change his position and move quickly to equalize facilities for African American use within the southern national parks despite these low numbers of visitors. The solicitor's office was urging the secretary "to break down the segregation of Negroes and whites in Shenandoah National Park," Demaray reported, and Ickes had told him directly that the NPS "must" provide equal accommodations for Black and White visitors. "I suggest that . . . you urge the operators to immediately provide some facilities for Negroes so that the charge cannot be made that we are not furnishing at least the same type and character of facilities that are provided for whites," Demaray wrote.[30]

Gradual Experiment with Integration

The conflict between established NPS policy and the recommendations coming from the solicitor's office and the Adviser on Negro Affairs was addressed in a conference in Secretary Ickes' office in March 1939. Secretary Ickes, First Assistant Secretary E. K. Burlew, Assistant Secretary Oscar Chapman, Adviser on Negro Affairs W. J. Trent, NPS Associate Director A. E. Demaray, and Chief of Operations Colonel John Roberts White were present, but there was no representative from the solicitor's office. As the players involved marshalled their arguments before the Secretary of Interior, it became evident that Ickes preferred to address the inequities in the parks gradually rather than acting boldly and decisively as his solicitor's office recommended. Trent later recalled, "It became apparent that no drastic revision would be feasible immediately," but it "was suggested that a step might be taken in the direction of doing away with separate facilities."[31] Ickes was attracted to Solicitor Margold's suggestion to experiment with a nonsegregation policy in Shenandoah National Park, but he was reluctant to take action that would effect change in all southern national parks at once.

Even within Shenandoah, Ickes evidently did not want to move too quickly or rapidly. Before the meeting, Trent outlined a sequential approach to the problem that he thought might appeal to the secretary. Trent argued that the "ultimate aim of the National Park Service [should] be to provide for all citizens, without segregation or discrimination, use of all facilities whether furnished by the Federal Government or by concessionaires." With this goal in mind, the Secretary should take "definite steps" toward achieving that objective, and

29 Accommodations for Visitors, Shenandoah National Park, 21 February 1939; Accommodations for Visitors, Mammoth Cave National Park, 3 March 1939; Accommodations for Visitors, Great Smoky Mountains, 3 March 1939.

30 Demaray to Cammerer, 11 February 1939, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

31 Trent to Ickes, 24 February 1940, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

to "illustrate what might be done." Trent laid out a series of recommendations in relation to conditions in Shenandoah National Park. Trent called for the desegregation of all picnic and camping areas operated directly by the NPS, including Lewis Mountain, and the elimination of signs designating facilities like comfort stations for the use of particular racial groups. The specific "business problems" that would need to be resolved with the concessionaires in dining and lodging facilities could be addressed at a later date.[32] However, even this proposal was too sweeping for Secretary of Interior Ickes. The resolution that ultimately came out of the conference was that the NPS would continue to "generally" abide by the laws and customs of the southern states in relation to racial segregation, but that they would inaugurate an experiment with integration at a Pinnacles Picnic Ground (formerly Sexton Knoll) in Shenandoah National Park. The Virginia Sky-Line Company would also be pressured to equalize facilities at Lewis Mountain by building the dining room, lodge, and cabins outlined on development plans for the use of African American visitors (see chapter three).[33]

In crafting this compromise, Secretary Ickes exercised his "discretion in the regulation of racial relations within the Shenandoah National Park" and made his views on a number of issues that had been the subject of recurrent debate and deliberation clear. Although southern national parks operated within the exclusive jurisdiction of the federal government, Ickes indicated that it was not his desire that they should become "jurisdictional islands within the states."[34] However, Ickes intended to fulfill the constitutional mandate of providing "separate but equal" accommodations. In a memorandum to Cammerer, Demaray reported that the secretary "very emphatically stated that equal facilities must be provided Negro visitors, not in number but in quality." This general guideline could not be evaded through half-measures like providing dining service for Black visitors in employee cafeterias. Nor was it acceptable to delay the construction of such facilities until there was burgeoning demand for them. "The question of waiting until there was a demand for services by Negro visitors before requiring the operators to provide such facilities met with sharp and distinct disapproval by the Secretary," the associate director noted.[35]

Many of the NPS's other arguments defending the policy of segregation were also to be put to the test. The selection of Shenandoah National Park as an optimal testing ground was not unusual. The NPS had developed a wider range of visitor facilities in Shenandoah than almost anywhere else in the southern states. For NPS Director Cammerer, the "pioneer" status of the park meant that generally, "both the character and the extent of the park operator's proposed installations" merited careful study because they might be replicated else-

32 Trent to Ickes, 20 March 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

33 Demaray to Cammerer, 25 March 1939, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

34 Burlew to McDuffie, draft, n.d., Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

35 Demaray to Cammerer, 25 March 1939.

where.[36] The NPS had maintained that concessions could not be operated for Black visitors profitably given low numbers of African American travelers, but W. J. Trent and the solicitor's office had argued that it was necessary to provide accessible visitor facilities before Black travelers could reasonably be expected to come to the parks. The equalization of facilities at Lewis Mountain would not only address the legal vulnerabilities associated with inequitable accommodations, but might also determine whether equitable facilities would stimulate demand and increase Black visitation. The secretary indicated that if African American travel to the parks increased, the NPS and its concessionaires should continue to invest in more accommodations for Black travelers.[37] Director Cammerer had also expressed the opinion that African American travelers preferred segregated facilities, and had suggested that integrated use of the parks could result in racial violence. The experiment with integration in a park which also provided segregated accommodations would test both these propositions. The potential for racial conflict seemed to be one of the main stumbling blocks that prevented Ickes from acting more decisively. As Trent later noted, the selection of a single picnic ground for integrated use was intended to "determine whether or not there would be any serious friction between the groups using the area."[38]

However, Secretary Ickes was also undoubtedly concerned about the political repercussions associated with thwarting Virginia Senators Harry Byrd and Carter Glass. In the 1930s, the disproportionate influence of Democrats from the southern states threatened the implementation of many of President Roosevelt's New Deal initiatives. Re-elected year after year by small and relatively homogenous electorates in their own states, southern congressmen accrued seniority and power, controlling two-thirds of the federal legislature's most important committees. Consequently, the president and his administration often courted the favor of the conservative "Dixie bloc."[39]

Ickes' interest in handling the question of segregation in the national parks gradually, because of these political considerations, was communicated privately to NAACP Executive Secretary Walter White. Within days of the conference in the secretary's office, White wrote his own letter protesting segregation in Shenandoah National Park. Despite previous communication with Ickes about precisely this issue, White flattered Ickes that he was "certain you did not have knowledge of this racial segregation" and "would immediately abolish this discriminatory regulation and practice."[40] Ickes replied by explaining that this question had been given "very serious consideration" by the NPS. "I am of the opinion that the history

36 Cammerer to Assistant Secretary Chapman, 1 March 1938, Box 20, Entry 768, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

37 Demaray to Cammerer, 25 March 1939.

38 Trent to Ickes, 24 February 1940.

39 Egerton, *Speak Now Against the Day,* 85–87.

40 Walter White, NAACP Executive Secretary, to Ickes, 10 April 1939, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

of discrimination for many years cannot be changed at once by an order of the Secretary of Interior," he wrote. "However, I believe that certain steps should be taken to demonstrate the possibilities of non-segregated areas." The secretary pointed to the experiment with integration in Shenandoah National Park at Pinnacles Picnic Ground as an example of the work the NPS was doing "to extend a friendly welcome to all visitors."[41] Through back channels, the secretary informed the civil rights leader about his long-range plans. Ickes asked W. J. Trent to call Walter White on his behalf and explain discreetly that he was "up against it with some of the southern senators and congressmen about some of the parks which were segregated at the outset." According to White, Trent explained that Ickes was personally "absolutely opposed" to segregation in the parks. "His plan is to demonstrate this Pinnacles Picnic Ground can be made so great a success that he will then have justification for abolishing all segregation."[42]

Although NAACP officials continued to maintain a cordial relationship with Secretary Ickes, they would also test his commitment to the course he had outlined. In the summer of 1939, Trent left his position in the Department of Interior to become the Adviser on Negro Affairs for the Public Works Administration. As Terence Young has observed, this "new post eliminated his ties to the national parks," but he continued to work behind-the-scenes to effect positive change.[43] At the conclusion of the 1939 travel season, Trent consulted with William Hastie—a former member of the Department of Interior's solicitor's office who was working as the Dean of Howard University Law School—about moving the desegregation experiment in Shenandoah another step forward. Trent also reached out to Walter White, asking him to phone him at Hastie's home to coordinate their efforts. Trent urged White to reopen discussion about racial discrimination in the park. "I think that the best way for me to enter this matter now is for you to write to me asking whether or not there will be further relaxation of discriminatory practices on Skyline Drive during the coming season," he wrote. Trent noted that White could frame his inquiry as a follow-up to Ickes' message the previous spring.[44] As planned, White wrote the letter and Trent forwarded it to the secretary with a memorandum summarizing his understanding of the secretary's intention to make incremental progress toward unwinding segregation in the parks. If there was no adverse reaction to the joint use of Pinnacles Picnic Ground, Trent recalled that Ickes had suggested that "more of the restricted areas would be made available to all people regardless of race." Trent noted, "To date I have heard of no untoward incidents resulting from the opening of the Pinnacles Picnic Ground to all groups." Rather, African American visitors who had toured the park during the 1939 season had reported to him that "no question of their use was ever raised by other

41 Ickes to White, 11 May 1939, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

42 Walter White to Ruth Logan Roberts, 15 May 1939, Box 445; Part II:A General Office File, 1940-1955, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

43 Young, "A Contradiction in Democratic Government," 668–669.

44 Trent to White, 30 January 1940; Trent to White, 14 February 1940, Box 445, Part II:A General Office File, 1940-1955, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. White to Trent, 19 February 1940, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

picnickers." If these reports were substantively correct, Trent urged the secretary to remove additional restrictions before Skyline Drive opened to travel in the spring of 1940.[45]

Local Resistance

White's inquiry prompted an NPS investigation into conditions in Shenandoah National Park during the 1939 visitation season to determine whether or not the integration experiment at Pinnacles Picnic Ground had been successful and could be expanded. In a memorandum for the director, Acting Superintendent Theodore T. Smith reported that it had not been well-received. He asserted that the integrated use of the picnic area had provoked "inevitable clashes" and conflict between White and Black visitors. Smith found it difficult to substantiate his claims because no formal record of these incidents had been maintained due to their "controversial nature." Nevertheless, he vividly recounted White visitors' discomfort with the appearance of Black visitors in spaces reserved for White use only. At Skyland Coffee Shop, Smith reported that White guests were "disturbed and irritated" by the appearance of two busloads of African American school children and their parents who "crowded against and strolled between the tables of the diners" in the cramped space as they attempted to secure refreshments at the lunch counter. The Virginia Sky-Line Company reported that many of the White diners were disturbed by this proximity and left their tables or cancelled their reservations for overnight accommodations.[46] The Black tour group was directed to leave the area by a ranger and to secure service at the segregated facilities available at Swift Run or Panorama. Smith noted that this group was from Powhatan County, VA, and "understood clearly the racial segregation as practiced in the State" and reported that the leader of the group quickly complied with NPS regulations. Smith noted that a similar incident at Panorama produced "much anger and disapproval among the guests, and embarrass[ed] the management greatly" until the Black diners were directed to the newly constructed African American dining room. The Assistant Superintendent acknowledged that in both cases, groups of Black visitors complied with ranger instructions and "showed a high degree of cooperation and willingness" to abide by NPS regulations that restricted them to specific parts of the park, but that local staff remained alarmed about the prospect of potential violence if other groups traveled to the park with a "different attitude." Here, Smith sought to undercut further mixed use of the park by emphasizing the "potential danger of unsegregated use of developed areas" and the threat of racial violence.[47]

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45 Trent to Ickes, 24 February 1940, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

46 Frazier to Cammerer, 1 March 1940, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

47 Smith to NPS Director, 28 February 1940, with handwritten notations, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

Smith also maintained that the "most persistent cause of complaint" was the joint use of Pinnacles Picnic Ground. "Time and again," he wrote, "the Rangers of the checking stations have been bitterly assailed for allowing the joint use of picnic grounds." Smith reported that rangers had found several parties of White visitors picnicking along the roadside and at parking overlooks during the 1939 season. When directed to take their meals to the picnic grounds, the groups refused and indicated that "they preferred eating there than in picnic grounds where there is no racial segregation." Yet Smith not only underscored the preference of White visitors for segregated facilities but also suggested that joint use of Pinnacles Picnic Ground had stimulated complaint from "white *and* Negro visitors" [emphasis added]. Although he provided no examples of Black complaints about the integration experiment, Smith's report was crafted to underscore the argument that African Americans preferred segregation.[48] The August 1939 superintendent's monthly report underscored the popularity of the "Negroes Only" picnic area at Lewis Mountain, with over 800 visitors using the space in a single month.[49]

In contrast to the popularity of the picnic grounds, Concessionaire T. McCall Frazier reported that demand for formal dining service at Panorama and Swift Run was low. Facing pressure from the NPS to construct the lodge and cabins at Lewis Mountain, Frazier suggested that the experiment with creating more equitable facilities for African American use had not in fact stimulated demand. Frazier reported that the Virginia Sky-Line Company had only served a total of thirty-seven meals to African American visitors in the two new segregated dining rooms constructed at Panorama and Swift Run during the entirety of the 1939 season. "Of this number several were served to our own negro employes [sic] on the days which they were off duty," he wrote. "There were many periods of four or five days at both Panorama and Swift Run during which not a single negro purchased even a sandwich or a drink."[50] Frazier remained unconvinced that additional facilities at Lewis Mountain were required. While acknowledging the NPS's request to provide facilities equal to those available for White travelers elsewhere in the park, he suggested that the company believed "it is not your desire that we shall at any time wastefully use the Company's funds in erecting units and providing facilities for which there is no public need or demand." Nevertheless, if "after considering the small number of negroes requesting service last year," officials in Washington remained of the opinion that the Lewis Mountain accommodations should be completed, Frazier promised that the Virginia Sky-Line Company would "promptly" finish the project.[51]

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48 Smith to NPS Director, 28 February 1940.

49 Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report, August 1939, Box 1639, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

50 Frazier to Cammerer, 1 March 1940, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

51 T. McCall Frazier, Vice President Virginia Sky-Line Co., 1 March 1940, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

With instructions from the Secretary of Interior's office to equalize facilities in the southern national parks, the NPS urged Frazier to proceed with construction at Lewis Mountain. To make the area profitable, park administrators suggested that the Virginia Sky-Line Company should help develop increased demand among Black tourists. To do otherwise would expose both parties to criticism. Director Cammerer suggested that Frazier might actively advertise the availability of dining service and overnight accommodations at institutions like Howard University. Although the Washington office informed Frazier that they expected construction to proceed at Lewis Mountain as soon as weather permitted so that facilities could be opened to visitors early in the 1940 season, internally, Cammerer indicated that if the concession proved to be unprofitable, the NPS might consider the possibility of closing it in the future or converting it for the use of White visitors.[52] A contemporaneous memorandum from Superintendent J. R. Lassiter indicates that the concessionaire agreed to proceed as "an insurance policy against future excessive demands for installations for Negroes."[53]

Thus, Trent and White had successfully placed pressure on the Virginia Sky-Line Company to complete the development at Lewis Mountain. The concessionaire constructed the proposed lodge and cabins and they were available to Black tourists during the 1940 season. However, their efforts to extend the integration experiment were not as successful. NAACP Attorney Thurgood Marshall wrote Solicitor Nathan Margold to inquire about conditions in the park after board member Mrs. J. E. Spingarn complained about the prevalence of segregation signs along Skyline Drive.[54] In response, Department of Interior Under Secretary Alvin J. Wirtz informed Marshall that Trent and White had recently prompted Secretary Ickes to consider extending the nonsegregation policy to other areas but that he had decided that the "present plan should be tried out for a little longer and that it would be unwise to effect too rapidly any radical changes." Wirtz noted that reports from local staff in Shenandoah had indicated that "while there have been no serious disturbances, the situation requires careful tact and handling."[55]

In Shenandoah National Park, Superintendent Lassiter and local park rangers continued to guide and direct White and Black visitors to the segregated facilities available in the park during the 1940 season. However, when W. J. Trent visited the park himself to conduct his own private investigation of conditions there, he discovered that they were not also informing visitors about the availability of Pinnacles Picnic Ground. Whether this was

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52 Cammerer to Frazier, 8 March 1940, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD; Cammerer to Chas. L. Gable, Chief of Park Operators Division, 8 May 1940, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

53 Lassiter to Frazier, 16 December 1939, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

54 Thurgood Marshall, NAACP Special Counsel, to Solicitor Nathan Margold, 8 August 1940, Box 445, Part II:A General Office File, 1940-1955, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

55 Department of Interior Under Secretary Wirtz to Thurgood Marshall, 20 August 1940, Box 445, Part II:A General Office File, 1940-1955, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. See also Ickes to Trent, 6 March 1940, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

done out of a desire to maintain segregation, to minimize potential racial conflict, or to fortify the perception that African American visitors preferred segregation, this local practice undermined the utility of the Secretary of Interior's experiment with integration and restricted the range of facilities available to Black visitors.

The ability of local staff to steer visitors toward segregated facilities and away from the only integrated picnic area in the park was facilitated by the removal of racial designations from NPS literature in 1939. Ironically, the development of the recreational area at Lewis Mountain and the erection of a large "Negroes Only" sign at the entrance of the site had made segregation *more* not less visible in the park, prompting a new wave of complaints (see Figure 28).[56] Shortly before he left his post as the Department of Interior's Adviser on Negro Affairs, W. J. Trent recommended the removal of "objectionable literature" from the parks like guide maps which designated specific spaces as White or Black. Calling attention to "the public

Figure 28. As segregation was formalized in Shenandoah National Park through the construction of a "Negro Area" at Lewis Mountain and the erection of "For White Only" signs in other developed areas of the park other than Pinnacles Picnic Ground, the appearance of signs like these signaled to visitors that the segregation of the national parks was an official policy not merely a local practice. NPS officials discussed how they might make the signs less "obnoxious." (Directional Sign, Shenandoah National Park, Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.)

56 Lassiter to Demaray, 18 May 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

provision of facilities by race is unfortunate," he wrote, "even though for the present some certain separate facilities are maintained."[57] The introduction of this language might naturalize the practice of racial segregation in the parks, making it even more difficult to eradicate in the future. Secretary Ickes adopted Trent's recommendation and approved this change.[58] In Shenandoah National Park, amended maps simply listed picnic grounds alphabetically without reference to race.[59]

However, with this change by the national office, the orientation of park visitors was left in the hands of local staff. As early as July 1939, Superintendent Lassiter was reprimanded for failing to inform Black visitors about the availability of Pinnacles Picnic Ground in addition to the segregated facilities at Lewis Mountain. In response to an inquiry from a touring club from Washington, DC's Cordozo Night School, Lassiter informed the group that they would not be able to picnic at Skyland—"an area for white people"—and directed them to the facilities under construction at Lewis Mountain.[60] Club President George H. Wallace shared Lassiter's reply with W. J. Trent who passed it on to NPS Acting Director Colonel John Roberts White. White spoke with Lassiter by phone and instructed him to also apprise the touring club of the availability of Pinnacles Picnic Ground when they arrived in the park. He also wrote up the incident for the Secretary of Interior's office.[61] White urged the park superintendent to "follow carefully the secretary's instructions not only to the letter but in the spirit."[62]

Nevertheless, the following season, W. J. Trent was informed by African American tourists that the park was continuing to distribute marked maps. He decided to visit the park to determine if this was a regular practice. When he entered the park at the Front Royal contact station in July 1940, he was handed a park map with areas marked "For Colored People Only" in red pencil (see Figure 29). Apprising First Assistant Secretary E. K. Burlew of this experience, Trent noted, "These 'write-ins' circumvent very effectively your desire to avoid mention of race in the literature." Moreover, they "distorted" visitors' experience of the park since the availability of Pinnacles Picnic Ground for "all groups without discrimination" was not similarly noted. Trent also complained about the "huge, blatant, yellow" directional signs

57 Trent to Burlew, 9 May 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

58 Burlew to Demaray, 19 May 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

59 Demaray to Burlew, 25 May 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

60 Lassiter to George H. Wallace, president of Cordozo Night School Washington Educational Touring Club, 14 July 1939, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

61 Memorandum for Colonel White, 18 August 1939, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79; John R. White, NPS Acting Director, to Assistant Secretary Oscar Chapman, 19 August 1939, Box 20, Entry 768, NARA, College Park, MD.

62 John R. White, NPS Acting Director, to Lassiter, 19 August 1939, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

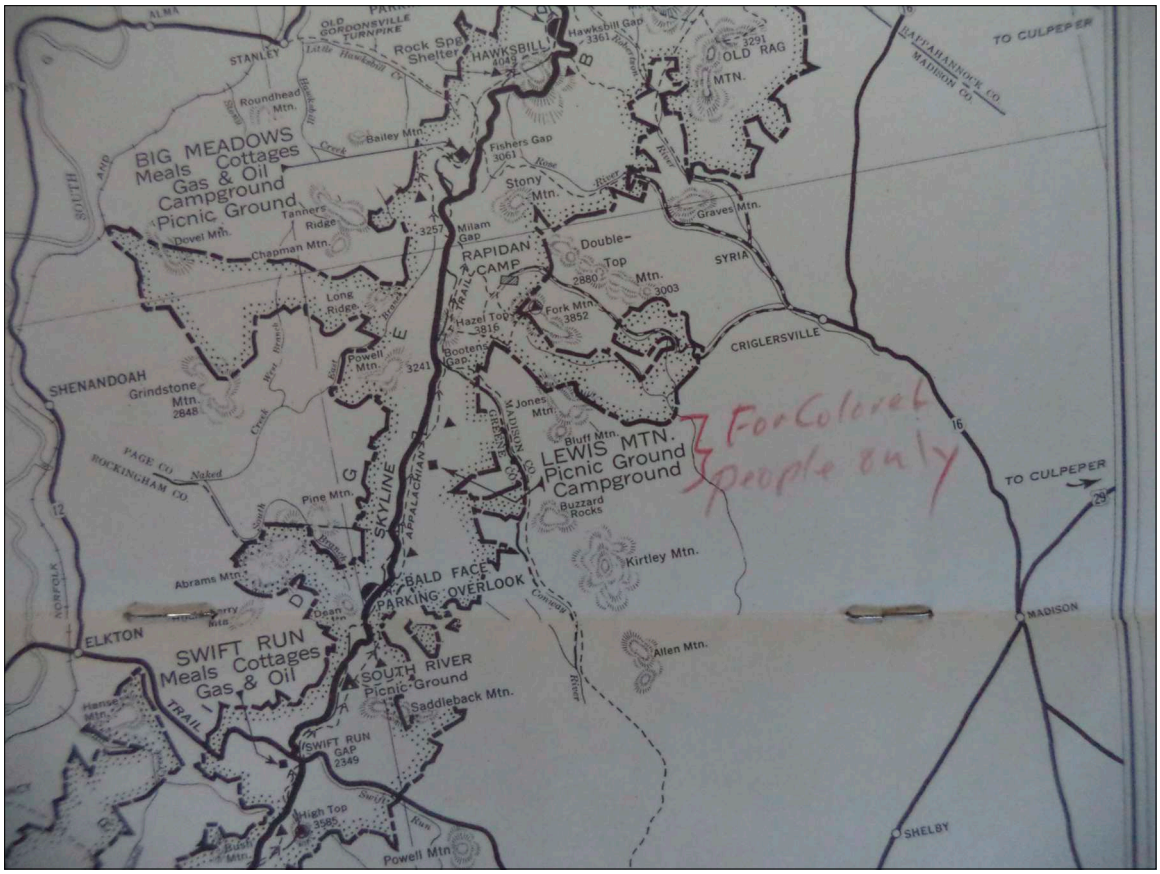

Figure 29. In 1940, W.J. Trent, Jr., former Department of Interior Adviser on Negro Affairs received this marked map when he entered Shenandoah National Park. Trent noted that African American visitors were being guided by park rangers to the segregated facilities at Lewis Mountain but not the integrated Pinnacles Picnic Ground. He also contended that the map "write-ins" circumvented the national office's decision to eliminate racial designations from park literature. (Attached to letter from Trent to First Assistant Secretary E.K. Burlew, 31 July 1940, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.)

deployed throughout the park. If local park rangers could not be relied onto provide adequate orientation, Trent hoped that the signs might at least be made "less obnoxious."[63]

Burlew expressed his sympathy for Trent's request and asked the NPS to investigate "who in the park has taken it upon himself to discriminate in this way." He also inquired about the feasibility of using "smaller and less conspicuous signs."[64] Superintendent Lassiter explained that Shenandoah's Chief Ranger Stephens had developed the practice of distributing marked maps as a means of rendering a "desirable service in orienting the Negro visitor with

63 Trent to Burlew, 31 July 1940, with copy of map, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD. Assistant Solicitor Phineas Indritz described these signs as "about 3 or 4 feet wide, 1 ½ to 2 feet high, mounted on a post about 5 feet high, colored yellow on wood background and placed on the edge of the road so as to particularly, even blatantly, visible" (Indritz to Acting Solicitor Kirgis, 15 August 1940, Box 14, Entry 810, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD).

64 Burlew to Demaray, Acting NPS Director, 6 August 1940, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

respect to the area definitely developed for his use and enjoyment." Lassiter noted Stephens was not aware of the larger policy-level conversation surrounding the maps and that the rangers had determined that further guidance was needed because African American visitors were utilizing picnic areas at Dickey Ridge and Elkwallow designated for White use. The maps were "held for issuance to Negroes" and were not distributed to all visitors. The superintendent suggested they were an efficient directional tool that eliminated unnecessary traffic congestion at visitor contact stations, but he assured the first assistant secretary that the practice had been discontinued.[65]

First Assistant Secretary of Interior Burlew was not entirely satisfied with this response and suggested that Lassiter had been negligent if he had not informed his staff about the purpose of changing the wording on the pamphlets. He also reiterated his request for information about the possibility of minimizing racial designations on directional signs.[66] Lassiter had sought and received approval to erect signs designating areas for White and Black use from Director Cammerer earlier in the year.[67] However, like Trent, other visitors to the park found them obnoxious. For example, in the summer of 1940, Dr. George F. Miller wrote a telegram to President Roosevelt calling on him to remove the signs along Skyline Drive by executive order.[68] In reply, Acting Director A. E. Demaray defended conditions in the park and described the integration of Pinnacles as an effort to "demonstrate the possibilities of non-segregated areas." Nevertheless, Demaray observed, "Since it is a fact … that in certain sections of the United States both races prefer the separate facilities to which they have been accustomed, it seems appropriate that this fact be recognized in a national area intended to be enjoyed by all citizens."[69] Miller conceded that some Black visitors might prefer segregated facilities, but pointed out that "there also exists another large group who feel that public institutions and their facilities should be open to all citizens without regard to race, color, or creed." Miller expressed confidence that the integration experiment at Pinnacles would be successful, and asserted that there was "no reason why such a step should not … provide an opening for the ultimate abolishment of such signs as I described in my telegram to the President."[70]

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65 Lassiter to NPS Director, 3 September 1940, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD. Shortly after this change in policy, the practice of distributing marked maps was also noted by the Associated Negro Press. Burlew assured the organization that the practice had been discontinued. See Burlew to Alvin White, Director of the Washington office of the Associated Negro Press, 23 November 1940, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

66 Burlew to Demaray, 10 September 1940, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

67 Cammerer to Lassiter, 15 March 1940, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

68 George F. Miller, MD to President Roosevelt, telegram, 6 July 1940, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

69 Demaray to Miller, 15 July 1940, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. This statement had been cleared by the Secretary of Interior's office and Demaray was instructed to avoid use of the "ugly word 'discrimination'" in his correspondence with park visitors. See Acting Under Secretary Mendenhall to Demaray, 12 July 1940, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

70 Miller to Demaray, 17 July 1940, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

In the national office, officials discussed strategies for minimizing the impact of the signs and passed their suggestions on to Shenandoah's superintendent. Perhaps the large "For White Only" signs might be "less objectionable," if they read simply "White." Acting Director A. E. Demaray observed, "A sign indicating that an area or building is for use by white people only, undoubtedly, tends to overemphasize the point."[71] Demaray also suggested a similar resolution to the controversy related to marked maps. If and when Black visitors asked for instruction, the ranger might "simply underline with red pencil, or by the use of a red arrow, the areas available for their use."[72] While these minor revisions might attract less attention, they would not resolve the underlying source of the complaints. The maps and signs provided incontrovertible evidence that segregation was established NPS policy and not merely a local practice.

Superintendent Lassiter's frustration with the national office's instructions to maintain a policy of segregation in most parts of the park without openly advertising it erupted late in the summer of 1940. "I believe what we need is more and bigger 'For White Only' signs," Lassiter wrote. The superintendent reported that rangers were "continually" confronting African American visitors in White picnic grounds and attached a report from his chief ranger about an incident at Big Meadows Picnic Grounds just days earlier.[73] Park rangers had directed an African American group from Washington, DC, to leave the area and go to the "colored picnic grounds." Since the group had almost completed their meal, they were permitted to finish their picnic but rangers refused to allow the women in the party to use the comfort stations in the area before departing and the group "complained bitterly." The ranger reported, "They seemed to be trying to make an issue of this matter by stating that this was a public area and that they [had] as much right to use this area [as] anyone else." After members of the group suggested they would take their complaint directly to Secretary Ickes, the ranger noted that he was enforcing established policy. "I explained the policy of the Park Service as to segregation because of the feeling toward negroes in the South," he reported. "The Southern peolpe [sic] want their Picnic Grounds separate from the colored people and it seems to me that the colored people would be satisfied within their own separate Picnic Grounds." The ranger asked for the names of the members of the group, but they refused to provide them. He collected their license plate numbers and complained that the group was "very discourtious [sic] about the whole matter."[74] Lassiter suggested that this interaction was representative of a

71 Demaray to Lassiter, 26 July 1940, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

72 Demaray to Lassiter, 23 August 1940, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

73 Lassiter to NPS Director, 1 August 1940, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

74 Ranger Downing L. Smith, Big Meadows Campground, to Mr. Hopper, Central District Ranger, 28 July 1940; R.G. Hopper, Central District Ranger, to Chief Ranger Stephens, 28 July 1940, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

larger pattern of visitor confusion.[75] It was also evidence of the constraints that continued to be placed on Black visitors.

The superintendent called for the abandonment of the integration experiment at Pinnacles Picnic Ground and a return to a policy of "definite segregation." He wrote, "So far the mingling of the races has only brought criticism from the white, and the separation has brought criticism from the black." In promoting a policy of segregation, the superintendent revealed that he was primarily concerned with complaints from White rather than Black tourists. Lassiter acknowledged that a return to racial separation would not "meet with the approval of that group of Negroes and their leaders who are not content with a gradual and steady improvement in the interracial relations but must have their millennium at once." However, he asserted, "It seems to me that we are making a mountain out of a mole hill in becoming excited every time a high-toned Negro files a complaint about segregation of races. Non-segregation may be all right for some people in some sections, but I think non-segregation in the south will work to the disadvantage of the southern Negro, although it might be to the advantage of the rare Negro tourist."[76]

The NPS did not forward this inflammatory memorandum to First Assistant Secretary E. K. Burlew despite his direct call for information about the status of the signs in the park. When Burlew reiterated his request, Lassiter drafted a milder response defending practice in the park while acknowledging that he and W.J. Trent held "two opposing viewpoints." Although Lassiter conceded that the "for white only" signs outside Skyland and Big Meadows were six by eight feet with lettering eight inches high, he observed that many visitors traveling along Skyline Drive evidently did not notice them. Signs in other parts of the park, presumably at comfort stations, were as small as four to six inches. The superintendent insisted that it was not possible to post a ranger at each of the developed areas to direct visitors. Since signs were a necessary expedient, "they must be large enough and conspicuous enough to accomplish the purpose," Lassiter wrote.[77] After receiving this missive, Burlew forwarded it to Trent, his exasperation evident. "I am at a loss as to what the next step should be," he wrote.[78]

Despite his frustration, within a few months, Burlew prodded the NPS to once again take up the question of extending the integration experiment in Shenandoah National Park before the beginning of the 1941 season. Acting Director A. E. Demaray assigned Chief Engineer Oliver G. Taylor to work cooperatively with Superintendent Lassiter to investigate current conditions in the park and make recommendations related to the construction of "sanitary and other facilities that may be necessary" before opening all picnic areas and campgrounds for joint use. These instructions suggest that even as the NPS explored the possibility of integrating additional parts of the park, Washington officials believed that a precondition

75 Lassiter to NPS Director, 1 August 1940.

76 Lassiter to NPS Director, 1 August 1940.

77 Lassiter to NPS Director, 16 September 1940, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

78 Burlew to Trent, 23 September 1940, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

for doing so might be the construction of additional segregated comfort stations. At Pinnacles Picnic Ground, sanitary facilities were not segregated but evidently officials felt that this racial boundary would need to be maintained if the experiment expanded more widely.[79] Shortly after receiving notice of Taylor's visit, Superintendent Lassiter directed his park rangers to send "any information or complaints or comments concerning colored people" to his office "*at once*." Lassiter evidently sought information that would undercut any effort to integrate additional park facilities, but Park Ranger Maynard C. Isett reported, "There have been no comments or complaints about negroes."[80]

Nevertheless, Chief Engineer Oliver G. Taylor's report on "Developments for Public Use in Shenandoah National Park with Particular Reference to Racial Use" generally supported Superintendent Lassiter's efforts to halt the integration experiment in the park. Earlier in his career, Lassiter had worked with Taylor as a fellow engineer. While working for the Eastern Division of the Branch of Plans and Design in the early 1930s, Taylor advocated for the development of segregated facilities at the Colonial and George Washington Birthplace National Monuments. In 1931, Taylor acknowledged that "colored people must be given more consideration by the Federal Government than is given them by the state," but insisted, "We just must in some manner continue to maintain the color line and keep the colored people in their places."[81] Given this investment in the maintenance of Jim Crow racial hierarchies and the segregation of visitor facilities, Taylor was hardly a disinterested observer.

In his report, Taylor relayed many of Lassiter's recommendations and incorporated them into his own analysis. Taylor observed, "The Superintendent advises against much more common use of areas at this time. He thinks that in time there could be more common use without difficulty, but that it must come gradually. The Superintendent thinks that there must be segregation in dining rooms and for lodging." Taylor concurred, recommending the maintenance of segregation in all dining and lodging facilities operated by the concessionaire, as well as campgrounds. Rangers had not observed any African American campers using campgrounds in the park, and Taylor believed that the existence of a White campground at Big Meadows and a Black campground at Lewis Mountain was unlikely to provoke complaint. He also maintained that the park should continue to provide "white people who object to close association with negroes" and "the negroes of the South who prefer their own areas" with picnic areas set aside for the use of specific racial groups. He called for the construction of two additional picnic grounds for the convenience of African American travelers in the top and bottom thirds of the park. In relation to his charge to investigate the potential for expand-

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79 Demaray to Taylor, 12 December 1940; Oliver G. Taylor, Chief of Engineering, "A Report on Developments for Public Use in Shenandoah National Park with Particular Reference to Racial Use," 23 January 1941, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

80 Lassiter to All Rangers, 8 January 1941; Isett to Lassiter, 10 January 1941, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

81 Oliver G. Taylor, Engineer in Charge, to Associate Director Demaray, 10 August 1931, Colonial National Historical Park Administrative Files, Box A03, 620-15, COLO, Yorktown, VA.

ing the integration experiment, Taylor conceded that the park might consider opening at least one additional picnic area for joint use, but he did not believe that any of the current picnic grounds designated for White use would suit.[82]

Taylor collected updated statistics on the availability of various facilities for White and Black visitors in the park, and noted that African American visitation to the park during the 1939 and 1940 seasons continued to hover around one percent. At Lewis Mountain, the dining room and lunch counter operated at five percent of their potential maximum use; the picnic ground at ten percent capacity. Taylor reported that the local African American community was "delighted to have their own area." It was the "negroes from Washington and Baltimore and those on tour … who at times object to segregation and write to Washington." In comparison to the infrequent use of facilities at Lewis Mountain, picnic grounds designated for White use were at or near capacity on holidays and weekends. The Chief Engineer observed that "many times negroes use picnic grounds that are intended only for white," and suggested that this was due to inadequate directional signs and park literature. Like Superintendent Lassiter, Taylor contended that unintended mixed use was largely because "the negro has no way of knowing which accommodations are for his use."[83]

Notably, however, despite local reports about discomfort with the joint use of Pinnacles Picnic Ground, the Chief Engineer reported that the area was "filled every Sunday and holiday, with an overflow at times to 150% of capacity." Taylor also acknowledged that "no disorders have been reported" and "there have been no written reports of dissatisfaction on the common use of Pinnacles Picnic Ground." Nevertheless, White visitors who objected to the joint use of the area had been observed by rangers who reported that "usually they get mad, freeze up and leave without talking to anyone." Superintendent Lassiter and his staff also contended that White visitors tended to "separate themselves" by placing distance between themselves and Black picnickers. While there had been no racial conflict or violence, the superintendent and the chief ranger believed that "under certain combinations of personalities and circumstances" the situation was potentially explosive.[84]

However, First Assistant Secretary Burlew viewed this collection of observations differently. There were relatively few African American visitors to Shenandoah National Park. Both White and Black visitors were using Pinnacles Picnic Ground with no evidence of direct conflict. White visitors had not filed formal complaints with the park, even when African American tourists used spaces formally designated and marked for White use only. In conference with A. E. Demaray and the NPS's new director, Newton B. Drury, Burlew

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82 Oliver G. Taylor, Chief of Engineering, "A Report on Developments for Public Use in Shenandoah National Park with Particular Reference to Racial Use," 23 January 1941, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

83 Oliver G. Taylor, Chief of Engineering, "A Report on Developments for Public Use in Shenandoah National Park."

84 Oliver G. Taylor, Chief of Engineering, "A Report on Developments for Public Use in Shenandoah National Park."

decided to continue the operation of segregated campgrounds, dining facilities, and overnight accommodations, but to desegregate all the existing picnic grounds within the park in 1941. Drury informed Superintendent Lassiter, "This decision is made on the understanding that it is experimental for the coming year, that negro use will be carefully observed, and that no publicity or statements will be given out locally regarding this decision."[85] NPS Counsel George Moskey was also informed that the use of integrated picnic grounds in Shenandoah National Park was not necessarily a change in policy "as it is only an experiment."[86]

Despite the general injunction not to widely publicize the change, Burlew informed W. J. Trent about this progress. The Department of Interior and the NPS also responded to letters of complaint sent earlier in the year by informing the writers that although dining and lodging facilities would continue to be segregated "in fairness to the Negroes and White people who prefer to have individual accommodations," picnic grounds in the park would be open "to all persons and the present signs will be removed."[87] After receiving this news, Trent thanked Burlew for his persistence and the interest he had taken in "trying to remove some of the unfortunate barriers that have been raised against the Negro people." The expansion of the integration experiment was "most assuredly in keeping with the best American traditions," he wrote.[88] In Shenandoah National Park, while "White only" signs were taken down outside picnic areas in 1941, the "Negro only" sign at the entrance to the developed area at Lewis Mountain remained. In the absence of any formal announcement, African American visitors were left to infer the availability of picnic grounds formerly designated for White use.[89]

Expansion of Picnic Ground Desegregation

The experiment with integrated use of picnic grounds in Shenandoah National Park was formalized as official policy, and applied to other southern national parks and monuments in the summer of 1942 in an effort to help boost "Negro morale" in support for the war effort. Earlier that year, the Office of War Information called on the Department of Interior and other agencies of government to help address this problem by making "every effort . . . to advance as far as possible, under war conditions, the Negro's aspirations to be freed from discriminatory restrictions." First Assistant Secretary E. K. Burlew turned to W. J. Trent for advice about how the department might proceed. Trent made a variety of recommendations, including calling on the department to take more decisive action to hire and promote African American

85 Drury to Lassiter, 25 February 1941, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

86 C. C. Mullady to George Moskey, 7 April 1941, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

87 For example, see Burlew to Norma E. Boyd, Chair National Council of Negro Women, 14 April 1941; Burlew to Trent, 14 April 1941, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD; Drury to Robert O. Ballou, 19 April 1941, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

88 Trent to Burlew, 3 May 1941, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

89 Drury to Lassiter, 25 February 1941, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

employees. But he also encouraged the Department to use the Office of War Information's letter as an opportunity to "issue a directive to all National Park Superintendents in the south and southeast informing them that hereafter there are to be no segregated areas in National Parks." Trent acknowledged that Secretary Ickes had previously concluded that it was not desirable to "set up 'jurisdictional islands' in the various states." Nevertheless, he observed, "Negroes feel … that the Federal Government does have a responsibility in such matters and should exert its authority to destroy racial barriers within the confines of its jurisdiction."[90]

Trent's strong posture reflected the growing influence of the *Pittsburgh Courier's* Double-V campaign, which called for a victory for democracy at home, as well as abroad. From 1939–1945, civil rights organizations and individual American citizens argued with increasing vigor that the United States could not fight Imperial Japan and Nazi Germany while still condoning racial segregation, violence against minorities, and other forms of discrimination at home. Civil rights groups called for eliminating segregation in the armed services, as well as legislation mandating fair employment practices in war industries and the civil service, condemning discrimination in education, banning restrictive racial covenants on property, and protecting citizens from racial violence and vigilante justice.[91] These concerns, and the rhetoric of an American war effort fought for democratic freedom, informed letters of complaint from tourists about the practice of segregation they encountered in the parks. E. B. Henderson of Falls Church, VA—a frequent tourist along Skyline Drive—reported that he was "humiliated and depressed" that printed directions provided to park visitors directed Black visitors to specific recreational areas within the park. Henderson argued that in advertising racial distinctions to White and Black visitors, "the Federal Government has once more set an example or copied a practice of the German government in its segregation of their 'hated' minority." Henderson, a DC physical education teacher and a committed civil rights activist, asserted that "thousands of self-respecting Negro citizens" would refuse to visit the parks if this policy was continued. Although Henderson acknowledged that many of Ickes' subordinates inside and outside the park were "believers" in racial distinctions, he was confident that Ickes himself "did not believe in such practices." He urged the secretary to put an end to segregation in the parks while he had the power to do so.[92] Henderson was a staunch and committed advocate for desegregating recreational facilities. He would later go on to chair the Washington, DC, Citizens Committee Against Segregation in Recreation (1945–1948) and would serve as President of the Virginia State NAACP in the 1950s.[93]

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90 Trent to Burlew, 19 May 1942, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

91 Donald R. McCoy and Richard T. Ruetten, *Quest and Response: Minority Rights and the Truman Administration* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1973), 12.

92 Henderson to Ickes, 5 April 1939, Box 1650, Entry 7, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

93 Martha H. Verbrugge and Drew Yingling, "The Politics of Play: The Struggle over Racial Segregation and Public Recreation in Washington, DC, 1945–1950," *Washington History*, 27 no. 2 (Fall 2015), 60.

In response to the Office of War Information's Inquiry, Secretary Ickes affirmed his commitment to the employment and promotion of African American citizens within his department. Moreover, Ickes intimated that he had been working with civil rights organizations behind-the-scenes to liberalize NPS policy. "For several years I have been working with leaders of the Negro race in Washington to open up national park and monument areas in the Southern States to Negroes," he wrote. The secretary described the recent developments in Shenandoah and indicated that he expected "to extend this non-discriminatory policy to other areas as rapidly as possible."[94] This letter, as well as Trent's recommendations, were forwarded to NPS Director Drury. The Department of Interior also asked Drury to review the possibility of extending the "non-discriminatory practice we inaugurated in the Shenandoah National Park" to other southern parks and monuments.[95]

Director Drury collected information from the regional office as well as the office at Blue Ridge Parkway, Shenandoah, Great Smoky Mountains, and Mammoth Cave National Parks. He painted a positive picture of current conditions in the summer of 1942. "Regardless of race, creed, or color, the National Park Service offers a friendly welcome and opportunity for all people to see and enjoy the national parks, monuments, and historic sites," he wrote. In Shenandoah, signs designating picnic areas and campgrounds had been removed. However, the lodges at Lewis Mountain and Big Meadows had been closed early in the 1942 season due to gasoline rationing and decreased travel. At Mammoth Cave, Great Smoky Mountains, and along the Blue Ridge Parkway, Drury reported there were no signs designating specific picnic or campground areas for White or Black use.[96] On the basis of this memorandum, Geographer Terence Young has concluded that "nonsegregation was close to being a de facto policy in national park campgrounds and other recreational facilities throughout the South."[97]

However, First Assistant Secretary Burlew discovered that the director's memorandum did not provide the full picture when he forwarded it to the Department of Interior's public relations office for use as a potential press release.[98] After closer examination, the press office ultimately concluded that the NPS's actions to date would do little to boost African American morale. "Some of the action such as the removal of signs from Shenandoah occurred more than a year ago," Acting Director of Information Walton Onslow noted. "There also seems to be a difference of opinion among park administrators as to the actual effect of removing the signs."[99] Indeed, direct reports from the superintendents suggested that the

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94 Ickes to Archibald MacLeish, 21 May 1942, Box 2807, Entry 749B, RG 48, College Park, MD.

95 Burlew to NPS Director, 21 May 1942, Box 2807; Burlew to Drury, 22 May 1942, Box 2860, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

96 Drury to Burlew, 12 June 1942, Box 2860, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

97 Young, "A Contradiction in Democratic Government," 672.

98 Burlew to Onslow, Division of Information, 13 June 1942, Box 2860, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

99 Walter Onslow, Acting Director of Information, Department of Interior Division of Information, to Burlew, 19 June 1942, Box 2860, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

removal of the signs—like the removal of objectionable racial designations from park maps and literature several years earlier—was not a clear indication that these spaces had been desegregated. Blue Ridge Parkway Superintendent Stanley Abbot acknowledged that "It is our practice to have the caretakers or Park Wardens designate picnic units for the use of the Negro park visitors." The removal of signs was part of a larger effort to make the policy of segregation "less obnoxious" but even in unmarked spaces Black visitors were still being guided and restricted to specific facilities.[100]

Moreover, like Superintendent Lassiter, other park superintendents called for the resurrection of clear directional signs rather than the expansion of the integration experiment to other parks in the south. In responding to Drury's inquiry about conditions in Great Smoky Mountains, Superintendent J.R. Eakin suggested that the lack of segregation signs contributed to low African American visitation. "In the deep South Negroes will not use facilities unless they are so designated," he wrote. Eakin contended that clearly marked segregated facilities would increase African American travel because visitors would be assured that "accommodations are avilalbe [sic] for their particular use."[101] In Mammoth Cave, Superintendent R. Taylor Hoskins reported that Black visitors were able to use all picnic and campgrounds without restriction, but he also indicated that African American visitors did not use existing campgrounds and that those who used the picnic areas in the park were not tourists but members of the local community. Black visitors who came from farther afield were largely "maids and chauffeurs," Hoskins reported. They were provided lodging in the hotel dormitory for employees and were served meals in the employees' dining room.[102] The regional office also reiterated its support for segregated facilities in the southern parks. They acknowledged that the availability of integrated facilities had produced "no trouble," but like Hoskins, regional administrators noted that it was also true that there had been "comparatively little use of these facilities." Regional Director Thomas Allen suggested that Black visitors were accustomed to segregation, and trotted out a familiar refrain. "The fact is that he *prefers* to have the segregation. He desires definite services intended for his race and he feels more comfortable under such circumstances," he maintained. Far from responding positively to the extension of a nonsegregation policy, the regional office called for its repeal. Unless segregated facilities were provided in the southern parks, they argued, "use of areas by the Negroes will always be a restricted use."[103]

In Shenandoah National Park, the park's new superintendent Edward D. Freeland provided an update on conditions in this pioneer park. He praised the conduct of southern

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100 Stanley W. Abbott to NPS Director, 29 May 1942, Box 2737, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

101 J.R. Eakin, Superintendent GRSM, to NPS Director, 1 June 1942, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

102 R. Taylor Hoskins, Superintendent MACA, to NPS Director, 3 June 1942, Box 2737, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

103 Regional Director to NPS Director, 6 June 1942, Box 378, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

Black visitors who strove not to make their presence "conspicuous by word or action" and conducted themselves in an "unobtrusive manner," but he criticized northern Black visitors from metropolitan areas who were "connected with one or more Negro organizations." Freeland contended that these visitors adopted a more "aggressive" stance and presented "difficulties" for the park. The superintendent noted that before tire and gasoline rationing reduced travel, Black and White visitors had been using common picnic areas. The rangers had been directed to exercise "tact," "patience," and "not to give the impression of discrimination" in their interactions with Black visitors. "We do, of course, mention that a very attractive picnic and campground as well as facilities and lodging, has been established for them," he observed, suggesting that African American tourists continued to be steered toward segregated accommodations at Lewis Mountain. Freeland suggested it was unfortunate that some Black visitors to the park tried to "forcibly impress their presence on all who come in contact with them." He felt that civil rights organizations should apply themselves toward educating their members about how to use public areas appropriately.[104] The superintendent's observations were grounded in an expectation of racial deference. His comments about the comportment of African American visitors in the park—and the distinctions he drew based on region—were also shaped by southern rhetoric designed to justify segregation. White officials often argued that local Black populations preferred the system and suggested that complaints were the product of provocation from outside agitators.

These were hardly the kinds of quotes that could be used in a press release intended to improve African American morale. In their initial appeal to the Department of Interior, the Office of Facts and Figures had concluded that to have a significant impact "words should be supplemented by action."[105] The removal of signs without a substantive change in policy, negligible African American visitation, and calls for more rather than less segregation by regional staff were not what they had in mind. "I believe we can find a better opportunity for issuing a bona fide release which will be of interest to the Negro press regarding the Park Service," the Department of Interior's Acting Director of Information Walton Onslow wrote. "I have instructed the Information Office in the National Park Service to be on the watchout for development of news of genuine Negro interest and to prepare a substantial release for the Negro press at the first real opportunity."[106]

Burlew agreed. In communication with Director Drury, he suggested that the administrator had misunderstood his intent. The reports collected from the southeast regional office and the southern parks indicated that there had been "no advance recently toward removing segregation in the eastern national parks and monuments." The purpose of his initial inquiry

104 Edward D. Freeland, Shenandoah Superintendent, to NPS Director, 8 June 1942, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

105 Archibald MacLeish, Director Office of Facts and Figures, 7 April 1942, Box 2807, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD

106 Onslow to Burlew, 19 June 1942.

was not to secure a report about the status quo, but rather "to see whether future proposals might not be made" not only in the four parks surveyed but throughout the region, including national monuments and national military parks.[107] Acting Director A. E. Demaray replied to Burlew's inquiry and acknowledged that the NPS had not taken any new action and that it was functioning in accordance with Secretary Ickes' formal policy decision in 1939 that the parks would generally abide by local custom. It was unlikely, Demaray suggested, that they would make additional newsworthy progress anytime soon. "With Service appropriations cut to maintenance only and park travel sharply reduced, it may be sometime before we recommend any statement," he wrote.[108]

For his part, Director Drury may have felt some embarrassment that his efforts to paint a positive picture of the NPS's efforts had been undermined by regional staff. As the first NPS director appointed to the position without prior national park experience, Drury may not have been fully conversant with the policy debates surrounding duplicative facilities in the southern parks when he drafted his initial memorandum. In June 1942, he made his administrative position clear. It was not the place of the regional office to make "public announcements" related to questions of policy, he wrote. Rather, NPS staff should exert themselves to carry out the nonsegregation policies established at the departmental level in Washington.[109] He indicated his own willingness to do so within a matter of weeks. Department of Interior administrators were evidently dissatisfied with the suggestion that little to nothing could be done to expand the desegregation experiment in the southern states. If the NPS was relying on Secretary Ickes' last formal policy statement in 1939, it was simple enough to issue a new one.

Within weeks of Demaray's memorandum informing Assistant Secretary Burlew that it was unlikely that the additional action could be taken soon, NPS Director Newton B. Drury notified the NAACP that picnic grounds in the national parks and monuments would no longer be segregated. "The policy statement that the picnic places that are available in the national parks and monuments are open to all visitors was evolved as a result of administrative action by the Department of Interior in an endeavor to add to enjoyment of everyone visiting these areas," he wrote. Drury's statement was an about-face for the NPS. While his predecessor had often claimed that both Black and White visitors preferred segregation, he framed the integration of picnic grounds as a beneficial development for all visitors regardless of race. When the NAACP asked for further information about why the change had been instituted, Drury explained, "Other than the fundamental concepts on which our democracy is based, there is no specific provision of law directing the establishment of such a policy."[110] While

107 Burlew to Director, 20 June 1942, Box 2860, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

108 Demaray to Burlew, 23 June 1942, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

109 Drury to Region One Director, 15 June 1942, Box 378, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

110 Demaray to Frank D. Reeves, NAACP Administrative Assistant, 17 July 1942, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

this was an important step forward, it must be noted that this announcement did not address the segregation of campgrounds, comfort stations, or concessions like dining and overnight accommodations. Furthermore, as funds for national parks were curtailed during the war, many national military parks and national monuments stopped maintaining existing picnic grounds and directed their resources toward the preservation of park features and facilities that were perceived as more essential, and perhaps, less controversial.

Nondiscrimination in Park Concessions

The Department of Interior did not move to address the segregation of park concessions like lodging and overnight accommodation until 1945. While this study focuses on segregation in Virginia's national parks, discrimination against visitors by park concessionaires and proprietors operating within the boundaries of national parks was not just a regional issue. Moreover, Black visitors were not the only visitors who confronted discriminatory practices inside the parks. In the summer of 1945, Secretary of Interior Ickes received a letter of complaint from Mrs. Herbert W. Hirsh after her reservations at Fall River Lodge and Ranch within Rocky Mountain National Park were cancelled with the explanation that the proprietor did "not cater to Jewish patronage." Hirsh's letter arrived just months after pictures of the liberation of Nazi concentration camps had illuminated the full extent of Germany's implementation of the "final solution to the Jewish question." The Fall River Lodge was not operated by an NPS concessionaire, but operated on private land located within the boundaries of Rocky Mountain National Park. Mrs. Hirsch had directed her complaint to the secretary's office because the letter she received from the proprietor was printed on letterhead advertising its location within the park. In reply, Ickes explained that the hotel was not under his direct control but promised Hirsch, "I propose to do all that I can to stop it." In an effort to place pressure on the proprietor, Ickes called on NPS Director Drury to investigate whether the lodge was dependent on cooperation from the NPS in relation to securing access to telephone, power, or water service, or rights-of-way.[111] The secretary's office also directed the NPS to draft an amendment to existing regulations that would prohibit the discrimination Hirsch described in her letter.[112]

The amended regulations were drafted broadly and addressed not only the practices of Fall River Lodge and Ranch but park concessionaires more generally. Issued in December 1945, they prohibited owners, operators, and individual employees at any public accommodation "within areas administered by the National Park Service" from "discriminating against

111 Ickes to Mrs. Herbert W. Hirsh, 22 June 1945. Ickes to NPS Director, 22 June 1945, Box 44, Entry 810, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

112 Oscar Chapman, Assistant Secretary of Interior, to NPS Director, 8 October 1945, Box 44, Entry 810, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

any person or persons because of race, creed, color or national origin" by refusing to provide services "enjoyed by the general public." Notably, this regulation was crafted not only to apply to concessionaires but also to businesses that operated within the recognized boundaries of parks. Moreover, the amendment also prohibited businesses and concessionaries from "publicizing such facilities in any manner that would directly or inferentially reflect upon or question the acceptability of the patronage of any person or persons because of race, creed, color, or national origin."[113] Ickes sent a copy of these regulations to J. R. McKelvey, the manager of the Fall River Lodge and Ranch, immediately after issuing them. In his letter the secretary noted that the practice of catering "to a restricted clientele" was illegal. "The Colorado statutes make such discrimination a criminal offense . . . and are applicable in the Rocky Mountain National Park as Federal laws," he wrote. Ickes called on McKelvey to send "prompt assurance" of his intent to comply with the amended regulations.[114] His office had already drafted a letter to the Attorney General asking him to initiate prosecution if McKelvey refused.[115]

In Virginia, this change to NPS regulations was not warmly received by the Virginia Sky-Line Company in Shenandoah National Park. Although the concessionaire's contract did not include a line prohibiting racial discrimination specifically, the company had agreed to abide by the rules and regulations of the NPS. Nevertheless, Vice President T. McCall Frazier objected to the application of the amendment on the grounds of a verbal agreement reached with the director's office in Washington in March of 1939. Frazier recalled that his company had only agreed to construct the facilities at Lewis Mountain in exchange for the assurance that "Dickey Ridge, Elk Wallow, Skyland, and Big Meadows would be reserved for the exclusive use of white people." Although the Skyline Company felt that the NPS "breached" the terms of this agreement when they removed the signs from the picnic grounds, they had not made an issue of it. Nevertheless, he noted, Lewis Mountain had always "carried the designation, 'for the exclusive use of a negroes.'" Frazier proffered this observation as "evidence of the Park Service's intentions" to abide by the spirit of their understanding in relation to the operation of concessions for lodging and accommodation.[116] Indeed, Superintendent Freeland reported to the director's office that it had not even occurred to Frazier that the amendment would be applied in Shenandoah because of the strength of this understanding and he was "much disturbed" when the superintendent suggested that it would. "Mr. Frazier said he could not possibly see how the negro could be served along with the white as is the intent of

113 "Discrimination in Furnishing Public Accommodations," amendment to Title 36, Chapter I, Part 2, Code of Federal Regulations, issued 4 December 1945, Box 3795, Entry 810, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

114 Ickes to J.R. McKelvey, Manager Fall River Lodge and Ranch, 4 December 1945, Box 44, Entry 810, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

115 Oscar Chapman, Assistant Secretary of Interior, to NPS Director, 8 October 1945, Box 44, Entry 810, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

116 T. McCall Frazier, Vice president and General Manager Virginia Sky-Line Company, Inc., to Edward D. Freeland, Superintendent Shenandoah National Park, 18 February 1946; Edward D. Freeland, Shenandoah Superintendent, to NPS Director, 19 February 1945, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

the regulation," Freeland reported. "Virginia is a Southern state." When Frazier demanded to know Freeland's opinion, the superintendent told him "it was a mutual problem" but indicated that both men would have to work together "to see that the regulations were obeyed."[117]

Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes insisted that the concessionaire comply with the new regulation. However, he resigned shortly after this exchange in February 1946 and his successor Secretary Julius Krug adopted a more flexible approach to enforcing the nondiscrimination policy. In response to Virginia Sky-Line Company's threat to drop their contract, the NPS came to another verbal agreement with the concessionaire through Senator Harry Byrd to apply the regulation gradually.[118] Superintendent Freeland later recalled, "What we attempted to do was to ease into it gradually. To get our own people in the proper frame of mind so that they would go along with the new policy."[119] Facilities in the park continued to operate on a segregated basis through the 1946 season. Nevertheless, by 1947, the Department of Interior's solicitor's office had drafted standard language for concessionaire contracts that prohibited discrimination in the provision of public accommodations within the parks, as well as discrimination in hiring and employment practices.[120] This language was incorporated into existing NPS contracts as they were renewed.[121]

These changes were consonant with broader shifts in the practices and policies of the federal government. In 1947, President Truman spoke before the annual conference of the NAACP in front of the Lincoln Memorial and called for "new concepts of civil rights." The president argued, "The extension of civil rights today means not protection of the people against the Government, but protection of the people by the Government." He continued, "We must make the Federal Government a friendly, vigilant defender of the rights and equalities of all Americans. . . . Our immediate task is to remove the last remnants of the barriers which stand between millions of our citizens and their birthright." Truman argued, "There is no justifiable reason for discrimination because of ancestry, or religion, or race, or color." While the president may have been sincere in his appeals for human rights, he was also driven by the exigencies of the emerging Cold War. In the East-West struggle for the allegiance of unaligned "Third World" nations, the American government strove to present itself as a bea-

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117 Freeland to NPS Director, 19 February 1946, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

118 Darwin Lambert, *The Undying Past: Shenandoah National Park* (Boulder, CO: Roberts Rinehart, Inc., 1989), 266. See also Reed L. Engle, "Shenandoah: Laboratory for Change," *CRM*, 1 (1998), 35.

119 Edward Dixon Freeland, Oral History Interview with Darwin Lambert, May 14, 1978, Shenandoah National Park Archives, Luray, VA. See also Lambert, *The Undying Past*, 266.

120 See Price to NPS Director Drury, 14 November 1947, with proposed language, Box 5, Entry 61, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

121 For example, see Contract with Government Services, Inc., National Capital Parks, executed 29 August 1949, Box 72, Entry 810, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

con of democracy and was embarrassed by Soviet propaganda that highlighted the nation's disenfranchisement and mistreatment of minorities.[122]

A few months later in October 1947, the President's Committee on Civil Rights released its report, *To Secure These Rights*, on the status of American race relations. The committee chronicled the disparity between the privileges and basic rights guaranteed to American citizens and the practice of racial and religious discrimination. The report recommended legislative and executive action by the federal government to protect civil rights "against private persons or groups, seeking to undermine them." Their recommendations included the protection of the right to public accommodation, transportation, recreation, and the nondiscriminatory distribution of "services supplied by the government." The committee also called for nondiscrimination in services financed by the government, including those provided by "privately-owned and operated enterprises," like park concessionaries, "which hold franchises from the state or enjoy a monopoly status."[123] In his 1948 State of the Union address and a special civil rights message to Congress, Truman publicly supported the findings and some of the recommendations outlined in *To Secure These Rights*.[124] Although the president avoided calling for specific legislation or issuing executive orders until after he secured his party's nomination for the presidency, his public pronouncements effectively undermined any lingering justification for segregation in the national parks.

With the abolition of segregation in NPS-operated facilities and park concessions, Virginia's national parks had effectively become "jurisdictional islands" in a sea of segregation. African American citizens of the state continued to be excluded from all state-operated facilities with the exception of Prince Edward State Park for Negroes and the organized campgrounds in Pocahontas State Park (formerly Swift Creek RDA). Consequently, the availability of picnic areas, campgrounds, organized camping facilities, dining and lodging, comfort stations, and gasoline service without regard to race, creed, or color in the national parks greatly expanded the field of recreational opportunities for local residents and visitors alike. Yet because Virginia's national parks were situated in a broader social, cultural, and political context, old patterns of visitation persisted in the 1950s and 1960s. Moreover, conflict between White and Black visitors and park staff flared up periodically as local practice adjusted to accommodate this shift in policy.

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122 McCoy and Ruetten, *Quest and Response*, 66. William C. Berman, *The Politics of Civil Rights in the Truman Administration* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1970), 239–240.

123 *To Secure These Rights: The Report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1947), particularly p. 74–75 and 163.

124 McCoy and Ruetten, *Quest and Response,* 96–101.

CHAPTER FIVE

Extension and Enforcement of Nondiscrimination Policy

As the national parks desegregated, park officials and local operators slowly adjusted themselves to new expectations. In the immediate postwar period, some park staff continued to steer Black visitors toward areas formerly designated for their use. However, by the early 1950s, the national office actively investigated reported breaches of the nondiscrimination policy, and internally, the vocal defense of segregation no longer marked NPS correspondence. Nevertheless, throughout the decade, Black visitors continued to write letters of complaint that indicated that some contracted concessionaires refused to provide them with equitable service. NPS investigators actively enforced the nondiscrimination clause included in concession contracts by following-up on reports of mislaid reservations, requests to sit in the far corners of dining rooms, and the refusal of chartered bus companies to transport Black visitors to their final destinations.

Despite these efforts, there is also evidence that many Black travelers and local residents remained unaware of the NPS's nondiscrimination policy in the late 1940s and 1950s.[1] The parks had become "jurisdictional islands" in a sea of segregation, and a hostile state climate perpetuated established patterns of visitation. Within the national parks themselves, the removal of segregation signs was not necessarily a clear signal of a change, particularly since the NPS had minimized or removed racial designations from park literature even when segregation had been established policy. Black visitors were largely left to infer that they would be welcome in developed areas and park concessions. It was not until the early 1960s that the NPS publicly affirmed its nondiscrimination policy by requiring concessionaires to display signs intended to inform the public that discrimination was prohibited in all areas under the jurisdiction of the Department of Interior.

When these signs were posted in 1962, the NPS's position stood in stark contrast to conditions in state, county, and municipal parks throughout Virginia. When segregation in Virginia's state park system was challenged in a federal court of law in the early 1950s, the state of Virginia chose to close the park in question rather than integrate it. Civil rights advo-

1 Erin Krutko with Maya Johnson, "'Under the Sky All of Us Are Free': A Cultural History of Lewis Mountain, Racial Segregation, and African American Visitation in Shenandoah National Park," NPS Cultural Resource Study (June 2009), 149–158.

cates in the District of Columbia and elsewhere pointed to the policies established by the NPS as evidence that recreational facilities could be successfully integrated with little racial conflict. Indeed, in the late 1940s, the Department of Interior and administrators in the National Capital Parks even tried to use their leverage with the DC Recreation Board to encourage the extension of their nondiscrimination policies to areas outside of their jurisdiction. Although they secured some limited gains between 1945 and 1965, national parks in the southern states largely operated in isolation and provided African American citizens with rare access to outdoor recreation in a park setting. For most local Black residents and tourists, this would not substantially change until after the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

Enforcement and Investigation

The enforcement of the desegregation policy took hold gradually. In 1946 and 1947, Shenandoah National Park's determination to apply the regulation slowly is evident in correspondence with local travel guide and charter bus companies. For example, in response to a request for information about the availability of facilities "reserved for the exclusive use of Colored People" from a Charlottesville resident compiling a travel guide, Superintendent Freeland informed him about the availability of the lodge, cabins, picnic, and campgrounds at Lewis Mountain. While the superintendent mentioned the availability of gas and food at other locations in the park, he provided no information about other overnight accommodations.[2]

Travel guides were a particularly important resource for African American travelers in the Jim Crow South because of uncertainty about local practices. The local Charlottesville guide and others like *The Negro Travelers' Green Book* provided information to Black motorists about restaurants, hotels, private tourist homes, gas stations, and beauty and barber shops that would provide them with service as they traveled through unfamiliar areas. In this regard, they not only documented established patterns of visitation but also helped to shape them. Within Shenandoah National Park, travel guides produced in the 1950s and 1960s would continue to steer African American travelers to Lewis Mountain. In Virginia, Lewis Mountain continued to be the only NPS facility listed in the *Negro Traveler's Green Book* until the publication was discontinued in the wake of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (see Figure 30). By way of contrast, *Virginia Scenic Historyland*, the travel guide produced by the Virginia Travel Council, listed every other developed area with overnight accommodations in the park *except* Lewis Mountain in 1961 (see Figure 31).[3] White and Black travel guides made no note of any change to NPS regulations.

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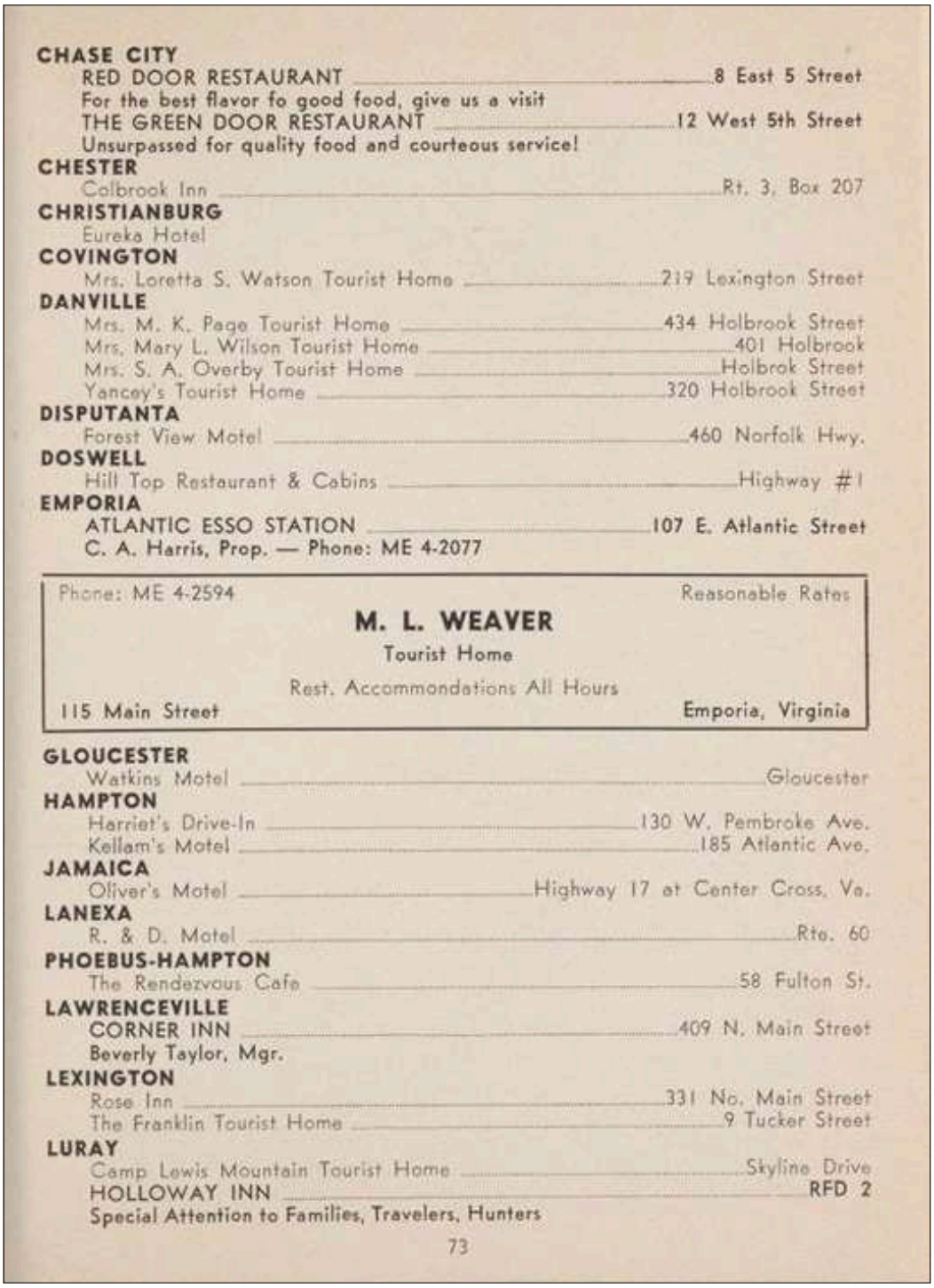
2 O. R. Randolph to Superintendent Freeland, 21 June 1946; Freeland to Randolph, 1 July 1946, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

3 *Virginia Scenic Historyland Guidebook* (1961), p. 14–15, A. Willis Robertson Papers, College of William and Mary Special Collections, Williamsburg, VA.



CHASE CITY
RED DOOR RESTAURANT — 8 East 5 Street
For the best flavor fo good food, give us a visit
THE GREEN DOOR RESTAURANT — 12 West 5th Street
Unsurpassed for quality food and courteous service!
CHESTER
Colbrook Inn — Rt. 3, Box 207
CHRISTIANBURG
Eureka Hotel
COVINGTON
Mrs. Loretta S. Watson Tourist Home — 219 Lexington Street
DANVILLE
Mrs. M. K. Page Tourist Home — 434 Holbrook Street
Mrs. Mary L. Wilson Tourist Home — 401 Holbrook
Mrs. S. A. Overby Tourist Home — Holbrok Street
Yancey's Tourist Home — 320 Holbrook Street
DISPUTANTA
Forest View Motel — 460 Norfolk Hwy.
DOSWELL
Hill Top Restaurant & Cabins — Highway #1
EMPORIA
ATLANTIC ESSO STATION — 107 E. Atlantic Street
C. A. Harris, Prop. — Phone: ME 4-2077

Phone: ME 4-2594 — Reasonable Rates
M. L. WEAVER
Tourist Home
Rest. Accommondations All Hours
115 Main Street — Emporia, Virginia

GLOUCESTER
Watkins Motel — Gloucester
HAMPTON
Harriet's Drive-In — 130 W. Pembroke Ave.
Kellam's Motel — 185 Atlantic Ave.
JAMAICA
Oliver's Motel — Highway 17 at Center Cross, Va.
LANEXA
R. & D. Motel — Rte. 60
PHOEBUS-HAMPTON
The Rendezvous Cafe — 58 Fulton St.
LAWRENCEVILLE
CORNER INN — 409 N. Main Street
Beverly Taylor, Mgr.
LEXINGTON
Rose Inn — 331 No. Main Street
The Franklin Tourist Home — 9 Tucker Street
LURAY
Camp Lewis Mountain Tourist Home — Skyline Drive
HOLLOWAY INN — RFD 2
Special Attention to Families, Travelers, Hunters

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Figure 30. Lewis Mountain continued to be the only facility listed along Skyline Drive in Shenandoah National Park, or any of the national parks in Virginia, in The Negro Traveler's Green Book: 1963–1964 International Edition. Victor Green gathered the listings in the Green Book from subscribers and travelers. (Travelers' Green Book: 1963–64 International Edition, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, New York Public Library Digital Collections, http://digital-collections.nypl.org/items/666fe280-82ee-0132-31f3-58d385a7bbd0)

Stay awhile in SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK
Visit the Skyline Drive for a family outing or a complete vacation. Delicious food, delightful accommodations on top of the glorious Blue Ridge.
Designed and operated for your full and economical enjoyment of one of America's greatest National Parks.
PANORAMA CROSSROADS DINING ROOM
New and magnificent . . Delicious food . . Superb view . . Lunch counter . . Gift Shop . . Service Station . . Intersection of Skyline Drive and U. S. 211.
SKYLAND LODGE
Modern Hotel-Cottage accommodations for 300. Excellent Dining Room . . Coffee Shop . . Handicraft Shop . . Horseback Riding . . Recreational activities.
BIG MEADOWS LODGE
Hotel-Cottage accommodations for 200. Famous Dining Room . . Handicraft Shop . . Tap Room . . Horseback Riding . . Recreational activities.
SWIFT RUN CROSSROADS
Dining Room . . Gift Shop . . Service Station . . Intersection of Skyline Drive and U. S. 33.
For Reservations and Information:
VIRGINIA SKY-LINE COMPANY, INC.
PO Box 191, Luray, Virginia
Tel: Riverside 3-5108
VIRGINIA SCENIC HISTORYLAND GUIDEBOOK
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Figure 31. This advertisement for concessions operated by the Virginia Sky-Line Company highlights overnight accommodations and sit-down dining facilities throughout Shenandoah National Park. Lewis Mountain, the developed area formerly designated for African American use, is not listed. An advertisement like this one continued to steer White visitors away from the dining and lodging available there. (Published in Virginia Scenic Historyland Guidebook (Richmond: Virginia Travel Council, 1961). A. Willis Robertson Papers, Special Collections Research Center, William and Mary Libraries.)

While individual African American travelers relied on travel guides to steer them to restaurants and hotels that would provide service, many groups of Black travelers visited the national parks as part of tour groups on chartered buses. The use of chartered buses allowed African American citizens to avoid some of the indignities of Jim Crow travel in the postwar period, not only on segregated public transportation but also in restaurants, gas stations, and other facilities, because they could rely on the tour leaders' knowledge of local conditions. During 1947, Superintendent Freeland responded to an inquiry from Virginia Stage Lines, Inc. (a Trailways operator out of Charlottesville) about the availability of a "Colored picnic area" for a local church group, by noting that all the picnic grounds in Shenandoah National Park were available for the group's use. Nevertheless, he encouraged the operator to take the group to Lewis Mountain "since it is usually less heavily used and it will probably be possible for them to find more available tables and unused area for their group picnic." Freeland did

not mention that Lewis Mountain was the formerly segregated area the bus company had inquired about.[4]

Over a short period of years, the park began to direct African American visitors to a wider range of accommodations. In 1947, a group of three hundred Howard University students visited Shenandoah National Park on chartered Greyhound buses. Familiar with the facilities at Lewis Mountain, they inquired about their availability in advance of their visit. After receiving an escorted tour of the scenic overlooks along Skyline Drive, they picnicked at Lewis Mountain for three hours before returning to Washington, DC. The Washington office was concerned that any effort to segregate this large group would attract public attention. However, because the group inquired about the availability of Lewis Mountain, no effort was made to direct them elsewhere.[5] By way of contrast, just three years later in 1950, when another group of three hundred Howard students and their guests requested use of park facilities for their annual picnic, park officials encouraged them to use not only the facilities at Lewis Mountain where concessions and a picnic area were available, but also South River picnic grounds, because its open space afforded an opportunity for the group to play softball and other games.[6] In responses to inquiries about the availability of facilities for Black travelers more generally, by 1950 Superintendent Freeland openly affirmed that all areas were open to all visitors. "The National Parks are public property and are set aside for the enjoyment and equal opportunity of all," he wrote.[7]

Ensuring that the park concessionaire, the Virginia Sky-Line Company, complied with the Park Service's nondiscrimination regulations was a more complicated endeavor. In the early 1950s, the national office received recurrent complaints from Black visitors that suggested their rights to use facilities in the park on the same basis as White visitors were being undermined through subterfuge. Under the direction of Secretary of Interior Oscar Chapman, the NPS actively investigated these complaints in an effort to ensure that park concessionaires complied with the spirit as well as the letter of the department's nondiscrimination regulations.

For example, in July 1950, the NPS Washington office received a telephone call from Virgil E. Heathcock, a Washington, DC, taxi driver who alleged that he and a companion had been denied service at the Panorama Dining Room. Heathcock and another Metropolitan

4 F. Page Nelson, Jr., Virginia Stage Lines, to Superintendent Freeland, 28 June 1947; Freeland to Nelson, 2 July 1947, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

5 Demaray to Shenandoah Superintendent, 19 May 1947; Chief Ranger Robert F. Gibbs to Shenandoah Superintendent, 26 May 1947, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

6 Nathaniel M. Adams, Jr., Corresponding Secretary for the Howard University Engineering and Architecture Student Council, 1 March 1950; Shenandoah Superintendent to Adams, 17 March 1950, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

7 Freeland to R. L. Sanford, 28 June 1950, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

Taxi Cab driver had transported ten Catholic sisters to the park.[8] The women were seated at a table in the main dining room, but the manager and hostess, Mrs. Fears, invited the drivers who followed to sit in the "adjoining dining room." It is likely that this space, also referred to as "the private dining room," was the dining alcove that had formerly been designated for African American use when the park was officially segregated. The sisters objected to being separated from the drivers, and Fears reportedly invited the large party to sit at a table in an alcove in the main dining room separated from other diners by stone columns. Again, the group objected to being separated from other visitors. Fears asked the group if they preferred counter service. They agreed and ate their meals at the lunch counter before leaving the concession.

After reading a report of the incident in the press, Secretary of Interior Oscar Chapman ordered an "on-the-spot investigation of the incident" as well as the park's compliance with the nondiscrimination policy more broadly. As described below, Chapman was embroiled in public controversy in Washington, DC, about desegregated recreation in the nation's capital and was particularly concerned that the incident at Panorama might lead to the perception that the Department's policy was applied inconsistently. "It would seem to me that the Department cannot carry out its services on a non-segregated basis in the National Capital Parks and permit concessioners in other National Parks to operate on a segregated basis," he wrote.[9]

Shenandoah National Park Superintendent Freeland maintained that it was "customary" to offer the small adjoining dining room or "corner" portion of the main dining room to large groups, regardless of their racial composition. However, even his own account of the incident indicated that the large group of Catholic sisters had not been invited to sit in either of these spaces until it became clear that they wanted to be seated with the two African American drivers. Freeland suggested that any bad feeling that had arisen from the incident was the product of "a misunderstanding."[10] Virginia Sky-Line Company Vice President Samuel M. Bemiss defended Fears' "tact and efficiency" and her previous handling of the "hundreds of Negro visitors" who had been served without complaint at Panorama. "There was absolutely no discrimination in the kind or quality of service that was offered to all of this party, including the drivers," he wrote.[11] This assertion echoed the company's previous efforts to justify the provision of segregated services in the park, as long as the service provided to Black and White patrons was equitable.

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8 Sister Alphonse Mary to NPS Director, 17 July 1950; Newton Drury, NPS Director to Secretary of Interior, 27 July 1950, Box 21, Entry 61, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

9 Secretary of Interior Oscar Chapman to NPS Director, 20 July 1950, Box 21, Entry 61, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

10 Edward Freeland, Shenandoah Superintendent, to Region I Director, 21 July 1950, Box 21, Entry 61, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD

11 Samuel M. Bemiss, Vice President of Virginia Sky-Line Company, Inc., to Edward Freeland, Shenandoah Superintendent, 20 July 1950, Box 21, Entry 61, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

These explanations were forwarded to Virgil Heathcock as well as Sister Alphonse Mary of Catholic University, who filed her own letter of complaint. In his letter to Sister Alphonse Mary, NPS director Newton Drury noted that Department of Interior had adopted a nondiscrimination policy and that he had ordered an investigation in an effort to ensure that the concessionaire "adhere[d] strictly to this policy." He expressed his regret over any embarrassment the group had experienced at Panorama and thanked her for bringing the incident to his attention. He noted that her report "has caused us to increase our watchfulness of any indication of discrimination by employees." Drury's letter indicated that the national office intended to actively enforce its established policy and investigate reports of violations.[12] Secretary of Interior Oscar Chapman also thanked Heathcock for reporting the incident and calling the administration's attention to "matters that may need correction."[13] In private correspondence between the NPS Director and the Secretary of Interior, Drury acknowledged that "something less than completely satisfactory service" had been provided to the group, but suggested that the practical limitations of the oddly-configured dining room at Panorama rather than a "deliberate attempt" to discriminate had led to the unfortunate incident.[14] Of course, the odd configuration of the space was a product of its segregated past. In his investigation of conditions in the park, Park Planner Arthur F. Perkins acknowledged, "It is quite likely that colored diners may be led to tables in the archways or side room unless they specifically request some other table."[15]

Generally, Perkins' broader investigation revealed that aside from Panorama, African American visitors did not often request dining room service at the park's other concessions, but instead patronized stand-up lunch counters at most facilities even when they came in large groups on chartered bus tours. Managers at concessions with overnight accommodations maintained that African American visitors had not requested lodging at facilities formerly designated for White use, with the exception of one "out-of-state colored visitor" who requested a room after the lodge at Skyland was full for the evening. Perkins noted that African American travelers often specifically requested lodging at Lewis Mountain, either because it had initially been used "almost exclusively by Negroes," because it was managed by African American staff, or because of its established reputation. Perkins reported that one-third of diners at Lewis Mountain were White travelers, and that the cabins, picnic area, and campground also received "mixed use." [16] This report suggested that African American visitors

12 Newton Drury, NPS Director, to Sister Alphonse Mary, 27 July 1950, Box 21, Entry 61, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

13 Secretary of Interior Oscar Chapman to Virgil Heathcock, 3 August 1950, Box 21, Entry 61, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

14 Newton Drury, NPS Director, to Secretary of Interior Oscar Chapman, 7 August 1950, Box 21, Entry 61, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

15 Arthur F. Perkins, Park Planner, to Region I Director, 28 July 1950, Box 21, Entry 61, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

16 Arthur F. Perkins, Park Planner, to Region I Director, 28 July 1950.

to the park in 1950 still continued largely to use the facilities that had been made available to them when the park was formally segregated. The most significant change following the adoption of the desegregation policy was the appearance of significant numbers of White visitors at Lewis Mountain.

Ensuring that lunch counter and dining service was available at national park concessions was particularly important in mid-century Virginia, since many local private businesses located outside of the parks' boundaries refused to serve Black patrons. The NPS's general policy was that concessions provided within the parks should not compete with or replace private enterprise, but rather provide services to visitors that were otherwise unavailable. In many cases, in parks near small towns and cities, park administrators believed that the needs of visitors were adequately met by surrounding restaurants, motels, inns, and tourist facilities. However, the presumption that both Black and White visitors would be able to access needed services outside of the parks did not always reflect reality, both before and after the war. The decision not to establish concessions in a given park impacted White and Black visitors differently, perhaps even more so after facilities within the national parks were integrated.

For example, along the Blue Ridge Parkway, local chambers of commerce resisted the development of government-contracted concessions and persuaded the NPS that travelers should be apprised of the tourist facilities available in nearby communities. Superintendent Sam Weems felt it was inappropriate for the NPS itself to promote specific businesses, but acknowledged that in the absence of this information, "The Parkway visitor has … been pretty much in the dark when it came to looking for lodging, food, and motor service during a Parkway trip." Consequently, in the 1950s, the NPS agreed to distribute a sixteen-page brochure assembled by the Blue Ridge Parkway Association entitled "Accommodations and Services" to provide this information to the traveling public.[17] The NPS itself would take care "not to recommend or criticize any particular establishment" in order to avoid the appearance of favoritism, but would use the pamphlet to "indicate all that are available."[18] Nevertheless, Weems urged members of the association not to list tourist facilities indiscriminately, but to recommend those they would deem appropriate for their own "close friends and relatives."[19]

A careful comparison of the facilities listed in the 1953–54 pamphlet and *The Negro Travelers' Green Book* of the same year suggests that the Blue Ridge Parkway Association primarily took the needs of White visitors into consideration when developing this publication. Both the Blue Ridge Parkway Association guide and the *Green Brook* provided listings for the larger cities along the Parkway, like Charlottesville, Lexington, Lynchburg, Christiansburg, and Salem, but none of the tourist homes or restaurants listed in the *Green Book* were also

17 Sam P. Weems to R. C. Wymer, Jr., 1 March 1950, Box 417, Entry 11, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

18 Weems to Region I Director, 4 September 1959, Box 417, Entry 11, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

19 Weems to Arthur Myles Jones, Secretary and General Manager Asheville Chamber of Commerce, 27 February 1950, Box 417, Entry 11, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

promoted in the association's listing of "Accommodations and Services."[20] Consequently, the utility of this publication for Black travelers was limited.

In 1964, Dr. Mordecai Johnson, the first African American president at Howard University, described his frustration with this practice after receiving a similar publication at Shenandoah National Park. The guide he received advertised the availability of lunch service at the "Belle Boyd Restaurant" in Front Royal. However, when Johnson and his family arrived, they were denied service and were threatened with a gun in full view of the White families dining inside. As he later recalled, "October 24 was . . . a lovely autumn day. But it was thus ruined for us. The bitterness and, yes, helpless rage and frustration of a man so humiliated and in the presence of his family defies mere words." Johnson called on the NPS to recognize that the descriptive literature it distributed promoted accommodations that were only available to White travelers.[21] Black travelers remained, as before, "pretty much in the dark when it came to looking for lodging, food, and motor service" while traveling along Skyline Drive or the Blue Ridge Parkway. As this example illustrates, the uncertainty African American motorists faced on their trips to national parks was not merely an inconvenience, it was also potentially dangerous.[22]

Similarly, Virginia Stage Lines, Inc. did not list Lewis Mountain as a stop in its public brochure advertising services within Shenandoah National Park, despite the fact that the local Trailways bus operator sold tickets to the developed area. On at least two separate occasions in August 1954, Virginia Stage Line drivers also refused to transport passengers up the drive and forced them to disembark at the bottom of the entrance road. Bishop R.R. Wright, Jr. experienced this indignity when he was in his late 70s. Wright was the first African American in the nation to earn a PhD in sociology, the former editor of *The Christian Record* (a publication associated with the African Methodist Episcopal Church), and a former president of Wilberforce University in Ohio. Nevertheless, the septuagenarian was forced to stash his suitcase behind a tree while he made the long journey up the hill. His family later returned to secure his luggage.[23] When Wright's niece brought this issue to the attention of the NPS, the chief ranger assured her that NPS did not "condone" this practice. After taking the issue up with the bus company, the operator promised to include Lewis Mountain in its printed literature and instructed its drivers to transport passengers directly to the lodge.[24]

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20 "Blue Ridge Parkway Accommodations and Services, 1953–1954," Box 417, Entry 11, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. *The Negro Travelers' Green Book* (Leonia, NJ: Victor H. Green & Co, 1953), Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, https://digitalcollections.nypl.org.

21 Mordecai C. Johnson to Secretary of Interior, 29 October 1964, Box 355, Entry 11, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

22 Mia Bay addresses the danger uncertainty created for Black travelers in *Traveling Black* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021), 2–8.

23 Mrs. A. C. Franklin of Kansas City, Missouri, Written Complaint made at Big Meadows Station, 12 August 1954, Box 396, Entry 11, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

24 Guy D. Edwards, Shenandoah Superintendent, to Virginia Stage Lines, Inc., 21 September 1954, Box 396; Guy D. Edwards, Shenandoah Superintendent, to Region I Director, 27 September 1954, Box 404, Entry

In the early 1960s, the NPS also actively investigated complaints from African American visitors about the reservation policies of the Virginia Sky-Line Company. Badella and Edna Campbell secured an attorney with the intention of filing a lawsuit against the concessionaire after it refused to honor their reservation at Big Meadows Lodge in the summer of 1959. After arriving in the park, the lodge manager informed the Campbells that there had been a "mix up" with their reservation and transferred them to Lewis Mountain. Initially, the company maintained that they did not have an available room because the lodge was overbooked as a result of taking reservations in Richmond, at their local office in Luray, and at the facilities within the parks simultaneously.[25] Later, they reported that the Campbells' room was not available because its previous occupants had decided to extend their stay. After staying at Lewis Mountain on the first night of their five-day trip, Badella Campbell returned to Big Meadows Lodge and spoke with a manager, expressing the opinion that he and his wife should be provided with accommodations at Big Meadows Lodge for the remainder of their stay since they had made a deposit to secure their reservation. Campbell was advised that "bookings were heavy" and his request to receive priority consideration in light of the mix up the previous day was not accommodated. After Campbell was unable to speak with the general manager at the Luray reservation office, he decided to take the issue up with Department of Interior directly. The solicitor's office carefully investigated the circumstances surrounding the reservation, but ultimately concluded that the concessionaire had not breached the nondiscrimination clause in its contract because the transfer of the reservation occurred in advance of the Campbells' arrival at the park.[26]

In the 1930s, Black visitors who wrote to complain of conditions in the southern national parks received letters of reply that justified the practice of segregation. By the 1950s, reports of discrimination prompted detailed investigations that sought to determine whether the nondiscrimination policy in the parks was being strictly adhered to. Nevertheless, the recurrent complaints that trickled into the national office prompted the NPS to require concessionaires to display a public notice that discrimination was prohibited in their facilities. Issued in June 1962, this notice was a public affirmation of the NPS's nondiscrimination policy. It read:

This is a facility operated in an area under the jurisdiction of the United States Department of the Interior. No discrimination by segregation or other means in the furnishing of accommodations, facilities, services, or privileges on the basis of race, creed, color, ancestry, or national origin is permitted in the use of this facility. Violations of this prohibition are

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11, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

25 R. Taylor Hoskins, Shenandoah Superintendent, to Region I Director, 25 August 1959, Box 396, Entry 11, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

26 Acting Chief of Concessions Management to Assistant NPS Director Price, 5 February 1960; Solicitor George W. Abbott to J. Clarence Young, Esq., July 1960, Box 396, Entry 11, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

punishable by fine, imprisonment, or both. Complaints of violations of this prohibition should be addressed to the Director, National Park Service, Washington, DC.[27]

For some White visitors, the notice called attention to the NPS's policy for the first time. "This sign states that there will be no segregation … and if anyone has a complaint to let you know," wrote William F. S. Gresham of Lynchburg, VA, after a visit to the Blue Ridge Parkway. "Well, I am letting you know now that I am complaining, and bitterly, about the sign, its contents, and its implications." Gresham suggested that the NPS officials who promoted such a policy were a "bunch of Jews and liberals" responsible not only for "ruining" Washington but also the whole South. He asserted that the NPS's attack on established traditions in the region abetted the goals of Russian communists who sought to undermine American society and its government. "Shame on you," he concluded in closing.[28] Assistant Director Jackson E. Price replied simply that the policy of which Gresham complained had been in place "for many years" and was applicable throughout the National Park System.[29]

Promoting Desegregation Outside of the National Park System

Gresham's negative view of NPS policy not only in Virginia, but also in the nation's capital, was undoubtedly shaped by public controversy between the Department of Interior and local officials in Washington, DC, which unfolded over the course of more than a decade. As early as the late 1940s, the Department of Interior's reputation for enforcing its nondiscrimination policy in the District of Columbia was firmly established. Within the National Capital Parks, the Department of Interior and the NPS eliminated racial restrictions from park areas directly under their control, and prohibited local organizations like the DC Recreation Board from maintaining segregated programs on federal property. However, the Department also tried to extend its influence in areas outside of its jurisdiction by pressuring the local recreation board to desegregate other activities and facilities they administered in other locations in the district. This decision precipitated conflict between federal and local officials and different agencies of the federal government. Nevertheless, throughout this dispute, the Secretary of Interior's office positioned the fair and free use of recreational facilities in the nation's capital as a direct expression of President Truman's and President Eisenhower's broader civil rights programs.

The extension of a nonsegregation policy within the District of Columbia involved complex jurisdictional questions, and it became a matter of public dispute when the District

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27 "Negroes Plan Baths on 'Bath House Row,'" NAACP Press Release, 28 March 1963, Box 108, Part IX, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

28 William F.S. Gresham to NPS Director, 16 October 1962, Box 363, Entry 11, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

29 Jackson E. Price, Assistant NPS Director, to William F.S. Gresham, 29 October 1962, Box 363, Entry 11, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

Recreation Board formalized its policy of segregating park areas under its administration by amending its bylaws in 1945. This change was opposed by African American board member Alice C. Hunter and National Capital Park Superintendent Irving C. Root.[30] Right before the vote, Alice Hunter filed a minority report and called for the elimination of the discriminatory language from the proposed amendment to the bylaws on the grounds that it was unnecessary. Hunter noted that the recreation board's proposed policy would have a chilling effect on the "spontaneous and voluntary interracial play relationships" that existed throughout the city. Moreover, she pointed to the desegregated administration of tennis courts, golf courses, and picnic areas by the National Capital Parks as evidence that the "democratic use of public facilities is possible to persons of all races without friction."[31] Superintendent Irving Root seconded Hunter's amendment. In a public statement, he asserted that the "underlying principle" which informed the NPS's administration of recreational areas in the nation's capital was their availability "for the benefit and enjoyment of all the people of the United States." The designation of certain parks for White use, and others for Black use, was "contrary to the purpose for which the parks were dedicated and set apart by law."[32] These objections were overridden by the larger board and the change was adopted by a 4–2 vote.[33]

Shortly after the Recreation Board announced this change, Acting Secretary of the Interior Abe Fortas warned Chair Harry S. Wender that the board's new bylaws, rules, and regulations would not apply in areas under the jurisdiction of the Department of Interior. "I hereby advise you that the United States Department of Interior reaffirms its policy of non-segregation," Fortas wrote. This policy applied "even though programs utilizing facilities within those areas are administered by the Recreation Board." Echoing Hunter's remarks, Fortas maintained that the "harmonious use of park areas by members of both races" within the National Capital Parks "had demonstrated the practicability of adherence to the principle of equal rights which is affirmed by the Federal Constitution." Moreover, Fortas asserted that there was no good reason why that same "American principle" should not apply in all recreational areas in the District "regardless of jurisdictional distinctions."[34]

In the late 1940s, the DC Recreation Board administered supervised recreation programs on playing fields and tennis courts within the National Capital Parks. They also

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30 "Playground Segregation to Continue," *Washington Post,* 12 June 1945, Box 3839, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD. For more on this jurisdictional dispute and efforts to desegregate Washington, DC's recreational facilities, see Martha H. Verbrugge and Drew Yingling, "The Politics of Play: The Struggle over Racial Segregation and Public Recreation in Washington, DC, 1945–1950," *Washington History*, 27 no. 2 (Fall 2015): 56–69.

31 Statement by Mrs. Alice C. Hunter before the DC Recreation Board, 12 June 1945, Box 21, Entry 768, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

32 Draft Statement, Superintendent Irving Root, National Capital Parks, 12 June 1945, Box 3839, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

33 Root to Secretary of Interior, 13 June 1945, Box 3839, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

34 Abe Fortas, Acting Secretary of Interior, to Harry S. Wender, Chair of District of Columbia Recreation Board, 10 July 1945, Box 2827. Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

handled reservations related to picnic areas in parks throughout the District for the "purposes of unification and convenience." However, the Department of Interior rejected requests by the recreation board to turn over administrative control of golf courses, swimming pools, and bicycle concessions as well. Interior took the position that the NPS's "greater experience in the administration of park activities, including recreational facilities and events of a non-supervised character" made their continued control over these areas "in the public interest."[35] Responding to inquiries from the NAACP about the impact the negotiations with the Recreation Board might have on the district's Black residents, Secretary of Interior Julius Krug promised that "no assignments of park land will be offered to the District of Columbia Recreation Board without complete assurance and a clear stipulation that all areas now operating on a non-segregated basis would remain non-segregated." In its negotiations with the Recreation Board, the Department of Interior recognized that recreational facilities of a local character should be administered by a local recreational agency, but also insisted that "all possible progress, with no backward steps of any sort, should be made in effectuating the President's Civil Rights program." Moreover, Interior officials announced their intent to pressure the recreation board to adopt a nonsegregation policy not only for areas under their jurisdiction but "in all public recreational facilities throughout the city of Washington."[36] In conference with recreation board officials, Assistant Secretary C. Girard Davidson informed them "that so long as the Board adhered to its policy of so-called racial segregation, it was useless to even discuss any requests by the Recreation Board to get the use of any Federal lands or facilities."[37]

The conflict between the Department of Interior's public position and the Recreation Board reached a climax in relation to the district's playgrounds, many of which were associated with segregated school buildings. In 1924, the act which created the National Capital Parks Commission provided authorization for the commission to assign control of park areas to the DC Commissioners for the creation of playgrounds. However, in 1948, the Department of Interior's solicitor's office maintained the act which had created the DC Recreation Board in 1942 had rescinded this authority, and nullified any previous assignments. The solicitors' office maintained that the NPS and recreation board would have to reach a new agreement about the appropriate use of these play areas.[38] Both the DC Recreation Board and the National Capital Park and Planning Commission Chair Major General U. S. Grant III disputed

35 A. E. Demaray, NPS Associate Director, to Ida Fox, Executive Secretary of Council for Civil Rights in the Nation's Capital, 14 June 1948, Box 2827, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

36 Secretary J. A. Krug, to Clarence Mitchell, Labor Secretary of the NAACP, 28 July 1948, Box 72, Entry 810, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

37 Davidson to Krug, 11 March 1949, Box 72, Entry 810, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

38 Mastin G. White, Solicitor Opinion, Use of Park Areas in the District of Columbia for Public Recreation, 2 August 1948, Box 72, Entry 810, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD. See previous opinion written by Solicitor Warner W. Gardner holding that the Commission retained its previous authority to transfer administrative jurisdiction over playgrounds, 16 September 1942, Box 26, Entry 810, RG 38, NARA, College Park, MD.

the Department of Interior's legal position.[39] The conflict was referred to the Attorney General's office for resolution.[40] The segregated or desegregated use of the district's playgrounds was the underlying factor in this jurisdictional dispute. As the Council for Civil Rights in the Nation's Capital noted in a letter to Attorney General Tom Clark, "Neither the National Capital Park and Planning Commission nor the DC Recreation Board, which administers a program of recreation on these areas, would so vigorously oppose the jurisdictional claims of the Department of Interior were it not for their determination to keep those areas Jim Crow."[41]

While these questions were pending at the Attorney General's office, the National Capital Park and Planning Commission continued to assign park areas to the District Commissioners for use as playgrounds despite the protests of the NPS and its refusal to recognize these designations. After six months of uncertainty, Secretary of Interior Julius Krug appealed to the Attorney General for an "early rendition" of an opinion on these questions.[42] However, this appeal for a quick decision was not renewed, most likely because the Attorney General's office signaled that it might make a determination that was not in the Department's favor if its hand was forced. Secretary Krug indicated a willingness for the Department of Justice to "sit tight" on his request for an opinion.[43] Meanwhile, the Department of Interior moved quickly to close an administrative loophole that could be used to undermine their position. Interior and NPS officials assumed that the nondiscrimination policy Secretary Ickes had adopted in 1945 for national parks, national military parks, national historical parks, and national monuments also applied to the National Capital Parks. However, regulations related to the National Capital Parks were outlined in a different part of the Code of Federal Regulations. Consequently, in May 1949, a similar amendment was made specifically in relation to the National Capital Parks. If the DC Recreation Board replaced an existing concessionaire in the operation of a facility like a golf course, the code was updated to make the application of the nondiscrimination policy in the National Capital Parks clear.[44]

Interior officials also moved aggressively to present their case to President Truman as a matter of public policy. In a message to Congress in February 1948, Truman had called for

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39 Milo F. Christiansen, Superintendent of Recreation, 29 October 1948, Box 72, Entry 810; U. S. Grant III, Chair National Capital Planning Commission, to Attorney General, 30 November 1942, Box 72, Entry 810; A.E. Demaray, NPS Associate Director, to Secretary Krug, 30 August 1948, Box 3837, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

40 C. Girard Davidson, Acting Secretary of Interior, to Attorney General, 18 September 1948, Box 2827, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

41 Leon A. Ransom, Chair, Council for Civil Rights in the Nation's Capital, to Attorney General Tom Clark, 1 November 1948, Box 3837, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

42 Krug to Attorney General, 2 March 1949, Box 72, Entry 810, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

43 Mastin G. White, Solicitor, to Secretary of Interior Oscar Chapman, 19 July 1951, Box 2968, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

44 Mastin G. White, Solicitor, to Secretary Krug, 39 June 1949, Box 72, Entry 810, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

the elimination of racial discrimination and emphasized that "the District of Columbia should be a true symbol of American freedom and democracy for our people, and for the people of the world." Secretary Krug informed the White House that the DC Recreation Board was deliberately subverting the President's civil rights program, and refused to negotiate agreements with the NPS because they were aware Interior "would not permit racial segregation on the park lands." Krug suggested that the Recreation Board had conspired with the National Capital and Park Planning Commission, which had adopted the practice of assigning park lands to the District Commissioners who then turned the lands over to the Recreation Board "for operation under a system of segregation." Krug noted that the DC Recreation Board maintained a policy of segregation as "a matter of administrative discretion and not because of the compulsion of any act of Congress." The secretary acknowledged that legal questions related to the jurisdiction over the lands in question rested with the Attorney General's office. "The technical issue before the Attorney General is one of law," Krug observed. "But the real issue is whether policies of racial segregation shall be perpetuated in recreation in the District of Columbia. It is on this issue that the battle lines are drawn."[45]

The secretary brought this conflict to the attention of the president so that Truman could take action to ensure that his civil rights program would be carried out in the nation's capital whichever way the jurisdictional questions were resolved. Krug enclosed suggested letters for Truman's signature that could be sent to the president of the Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia and the chair of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission. His drafted letter to Major General U. S. Grant III chided the chair for the Commission's role as a "bulwark in the maintenance and spread of racial segregation and discrimination in the district" and the perpetuation of racial designations in recreational areas which were "not compelled by statute." The Secretary of Interior also called on the President to support legislation that would provide for the maintenance and operation of the National Capital Parks to be made entirely from appropriations from the general fund of the Treasury, instead of being supported in part from the general fund of the District of Columbia. Krug argued that this fiscal change would "clearly define the Federal character of the National Capital Parks, and would eliminate one of the grounds urged in support of the extension of segregation practices to the park areas."[46]

The Department of Interior and the NPS continued to maintain open communication with the DC Recreation Board throughout this period in the hope of reaching a mutually acceptable agreement about park lands and public recreation in the district. As news of these negotiations became public knowledge, local civil rights leaders urged the Department of

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45 Secretary of Interior Krug to President Truman, with enclosed draft letter to Major General US. Grant III, Chair of the National Capital and Planning Commission, 4 April 1949, Box 72, Entry 810, NARA, College Park, MD.

46 Secretary of Interior Krug to President Truman, with enclosed draft letter to Major General US. Grant III, Chair of the National Capital and Planning Commission, 4 April 1949, Box 72, Entry 810, NARA, College Park, MD.

Interior to remain steadfast and adopt the position that no facilities would be turned over to the Recreation Board without a commitment to abolish segregation in all its activities. African American attorney Charles Hamilton Houston noted that Truman's civil rights platform was being thwarted by southern senators from his own party, undermining the confidence of African American voters in the administration's commitment to the elimination of segregation and discrimination. "The Department of Interior under Secretary Ickes was always the Department that saved the faith of minorities in the Administration as far as domestic affairs were concerned," Houston wrote. "The Department of Interior has a tradition of standing four-square without compromise, for a single standard of citizenship and civil rights. It must, for its own sake and for the sake of the Administration, continue that tradition." Houston also emphasized the international repercussions the Department of Interior's stand in relation to the emergent Cold War: "Every concession to segregation in the Nation's capital city embarrasses the United States in international affairs, discredits our assumption of leadership of the democratic nations vis-à-vis the colored peoples of the world, and furnishes more material for anti-American propaganda." Houston urged the Department of Interior to "demand the maximum" concessions from the board, and not to settle for half-measures if they could be avoided.[47]

This was the posture that the Department of Interior adopted in their conversations with the recreation board. When district officials challenged Interior's authority over their activities on non-federal lands, Assistant Secretary C. Girard Davidson informed them that the department intended to exercise its "discretion to make conditions for the Board's use of any park lands." He also stated that the department felt that the recreation board had a responsibility to ensure that its programs were not "operating in violation of the President's civil rights program." Board officials retorted that they had no obligation to comply with the president's platform. Davidson expressed his "shock" and disappointment with this position and asserted that it was precisely this attitude which made the Department of Interior "reluctant to let them use our lands."[48]

Local support for perpetuating the practice of segregation was also evident in letters of complaint the Department of Interior received from White residents like Gordon M. Atherholt, president of the Northwest Council of Citizens Associations. Atherholt maintained that the Department of Interior's policy of permitting the unsegregated use of park facilities jeopardized public health and the "morals" of the district's children. He suggested that African American citizens were more likely to carry syphilis and tuberculosis, and that joint use of public facilities like water fountains, toilets, and wading and swimming pools exposed White people to "readily communicable and transmissible diseases." Moreover, Atherholt claimed that the "immature minds" of White children recreating at such facilities would be irreparably

47 Charles Hamilton Houston to C. Girard Davidson, Assistant Secretary of Interior, 15 April 1949, Box 386, Part II:A General Office File, 1940-1955, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

48 Davidson to Krug, 25 March 1949, Box 72, Entry 810, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

damaged when "forced into association" with Black youths with higher rates of homicide and illegitimate birth.[49] In reply, Secretary of Interior Julius Krug forcefully rejected Atherholt's arguments and the scientific validity of his claims. "Your assertions lack any foundation in fact," Krug noted. If the desegregated use of public parks resulted in "white persons … becom[ing] more syphilitic, tubercular, and homicidal, and more productive of illegitimate progeny," surely these same "shocking results" would also be evident in other areas where Black and White citizens intermingled freely like public street cars, music concerts, stores, sports stadiums, and private homes where White people employed African American domestics. "I am sure that you yourself would hesitate before signing a letter making such bald assertions," Krug wrote before he pointed to studies that demonstrated that venereal disease was not spread in swimming pools. "The problem of racial segregation in the use of recreational facilities in the District of Columbia is one which goes to the fundamental basis of democracy and individual liberties," the Secretary of Interior maintained. "Our Nation, conceived in war, and preserved by civil and world war, is a monument to our conviction that all men are created equal before the law." The unsegregated use of park facilities in the nation's capital was reflection of this general principle.[50]

Public controversy related to desegregated use of swimming pools under the jurisdiction of the Department of Interior erupted in July 1949 as a result of racial conflict at the Anacostia Pool. Although the pools operated by NPS concessionaire Government Services, Inc. were desegregated, Black families had not attempted to swim at locations formerly reserved for White use. Instead, they swam in the nearby Anacostia River. However, the waters of the river were unpredictable and unsupervised, and in the period between 1945 and 1948 a dozen African American boys had drowned while seeking respite from the district's notorious summer heat. Local commentator E. B. Henderson observed that each of these children was "as much a sacrifice to racial prejudice as though he were murdered by sheeted bands of cowards in Alabama, Mississippi, or Georgia." [51] As historian Andrew Kahrl has observed, the exclusion of Black Americans from places of organized recreation placed Black children at risk in Jim Crow cities across the nation.[52] As a result of these concerns, groups of children and adults decided to patronize the Anacostia and McKinley pools in the summer of 1949.

This challenge to local practice prompted several "minor disturbances," but public opinion became inflamed when members of the Young Progressive Party led by Clark Foreman, former Department of Interior Adviser on Negro Affairs, distributed pamphlets in support of the NPS's nondiscrimination policy at the Anacostia Pool (see Figure 32). [53] Some

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49 Gordon M. Atherholt to Krug, 1 July 1949, Box 3837, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

50 Krug to Atherholt, 8 August 1949, Box 72, Entry 810, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

51 Edwin Henderson, "Non-Segregation Pools Disturb DC Public," *New Journal and Guide,* 9 July 1949.

52 Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours*, 116–117.

53 Carlton Skinner, Director of Information, to Philip Graham, president and publisher of *The Washington Post*, 20 June 1949, Box 3837, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

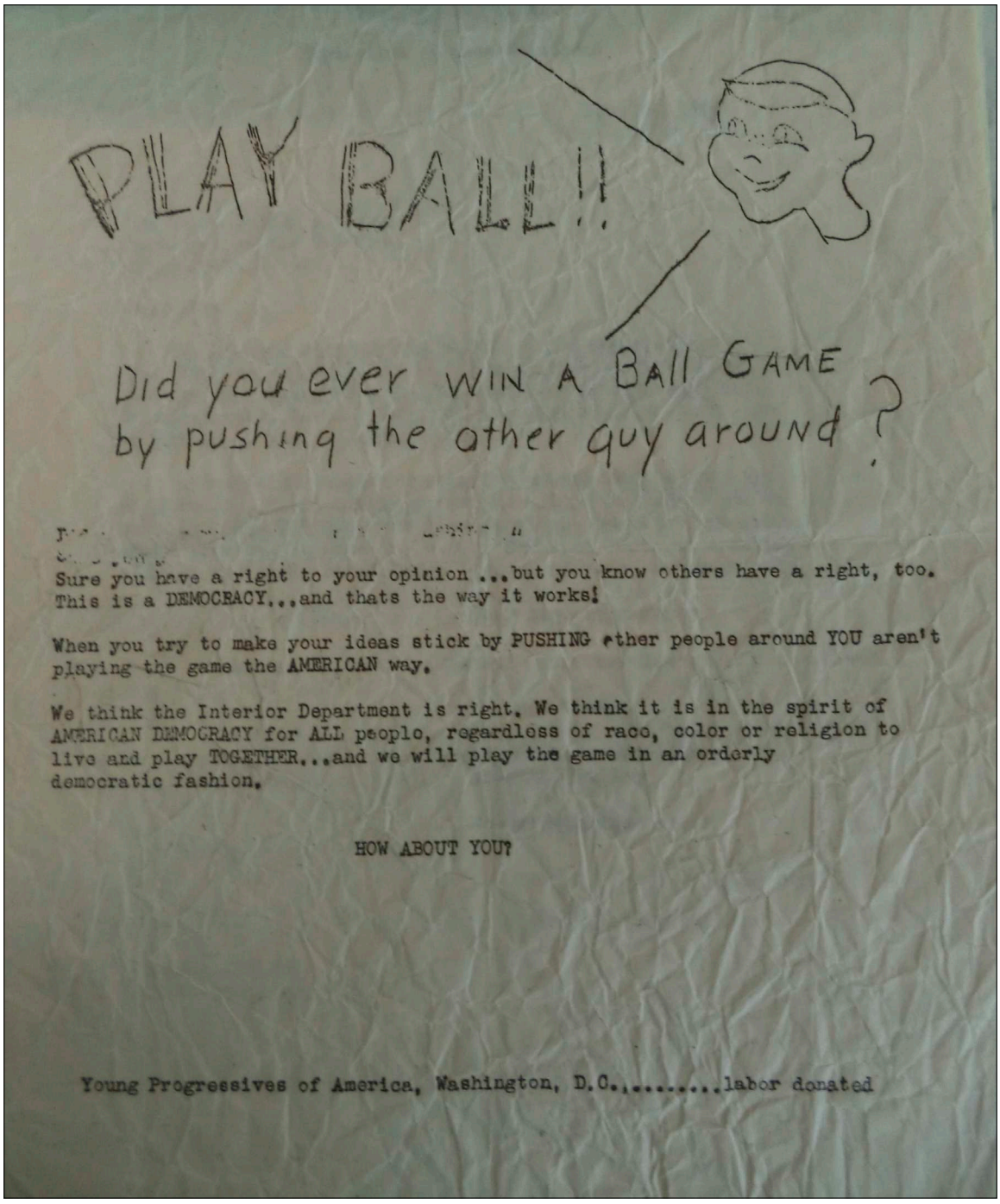
PLAY BALL!!
Did you ever WIN A BALL GAME by pushing the other guy around?
Sure you have a right to your opinion ...but you know others have a right, too. This is a DEMOCRACY...and thats the way it works!
When you try to make your ideas stick by PUSHING other people around YOU aren't playing the game the AMERICAN way.
We think the Interior Department is right. We think it is in the spirit of AMERICAN DEMOCRACY for ALL people, regardless of race, color or religion to live and play TOGETHER...and we will play the game in an orderly democratic fashion.
HOW ABOUT YOU?
Young Progressives of America, Washington, D.C.,.....labor donated

Figure 32. This mimeographed pamphlet was distributed at the Anacostia Pool in the summer of 1949 as African American residents attempted to swim at the facility for the first time. Clark Foreman, a former Department of Interior Adviser on Negro Affairs, was a leader in the Young Progressives of America and was quoted in local newspapers vocalizing his support for the department's nondiscrimination policy. Secretary of Interior Julius Krug was of the opinion that the pamphlets enflamed local sentiment and contributed to the racial violence that erupted at the pool. This copy, preserved in the National Archives, is visibly crumpled. (Box 3837, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.)

reports indicate that the tension drew as many as one thousand people to the recreational facility, and several people, both Black and White, were injured.[54] Secretary Krug temporarily closed the pool out of concern that it would continue to be a site of public disorder. In response, the NAACP urged him not to capitulate to "bands of white hoodlums" or surrender "to forces of disorder and bigotry." Krug assured the organization that he would reopen the pool as quickly as possible on a nonsegregated basis. He repeated his commitment to making the facility available to all citizens and ensuring their ability to swim "without either mob interference or surrender to vicious prejudice."[55] The pool was reopened the following season without conflict. Although the DC Recreation Board attempted to use this conflict as leverage to secure the transfer of the administration of the swimming pools to their organization as segregated, the Department of Interior refused to do so.

In August 1949 the temporary closure of this swimming pool, coupled with a public announcement that the Department of Interior had reached an agreement with the DC Board of Recreation in relation to recreational programs within the National Capital Parks, generated a wave of concern that the Department was wavering in its determination to extend its nondiscrimination policy. In the agreement, the DC Board of Recreation agreed that all activities or facilities it operated on park lands under the jurisdiction of the Department of Interior would be operated "without any restriction as to race, creed, color, or national origin." They also pledged to make "every possible and realistic effort toward the removal of racial segregation" in other activities and programs they supervised on lands operated under the jurisdiction of the commissioners of the District of Columbia or the Board of Education, including those assigned for playground purposes. If the Attorney General ruled that the latter parks were under the jurisdiction of the Department of Interior, NPS regulations related to nondiscrimination would be applied. Swimming pools would not be turned over to the board until they agreed to operate them on a "democratic basis."[56]

In some circles, this agreement was viewed as a retreat from the Department's previous posture, since it did not require the DC Recreation Board to eliminate all segregation from all its activities and facilities irrespective of their location. As an African American representative on the recreation board, Alice Hunter wrote the Secretary of Interior urging him to maintain his position of "*no* compromise."[57] Local civil rights organizations also wrote letters of protest to President Truman: "How can the Federal Government morally make a demand for democracy in occupied foreign territories when it capitulates to the forces of segregation in its own capital? How does the United States stand before the non-white world when it

54 "Race Fights at Swim Pool in Washington," *New Journal and Guide*, 2 July 1949.

55 Krug to Roy Wilkins, NAACP Acting Secretary, 28 July 1949, Box 72, Entry 810, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

56 Krug to P.L. Prattis, Executive Editor of the *Pittsburg Courier*, 23 September 1949, Box 72, Entry 810, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

57 Alice C. Hunter, Secretary DC Recreation Board to Krug, 7 August 1949, Box 3837, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

retreats before the racial segregationists at the seat of its own government?" an African American civic association in the district queried. In adopting a policy of "retreat and surrender," the group maintained, the Department of Interior had provided communist propagandists with evidence of the United States' "moral inconsistency." They also warned the president about the potential political repercussions of the agreement. When Congress refused to pass the president's civil rights program, African American voters had maintained their faith in him personally. "They took heart when you pressed forward in the executive departments against segregation and discrimination in the armed forces, the national parks, and Federal recreation areas in the Nation's capital," the group wrote. "Now, the Executive surrenders. Where shall the minorities put their faith?" The organization's president, G. L. Bishop, suggested that the agreement was even more troubling because of the Department of Interior's long record of taking a stand against segregation. They expressed concern that this concession to the segregationist's demands would establish a precedent that might result in "more vociferous, belligerent demands" and the abolition of nondiscrimination clauses from NPS contracts.[58]

Charles Hamilton Houston, the group's attorney, also wrote Secretary Krug personally and suggested that his agreement with the board failed to live up to Harold Ickes' legacy. "Personal comparisons are invidious, but one cannot help thinking how Secretary Ickes opened the golf courses, the Rock Creek Park recreation areas, the tennis courts, and other recreation features which you now propose to cede to the District of Columbia Board of Recreation which in its actual operation enforces segregation so strictly that it refuses to recognize white and Negro teams or players competing against each other in non-contact games," Houston wrote.[59] Despite Houston's reservations, the agreement with the DC Recreation Board did not result in a rollback of the NPS nondiscrimination policy. Moreover, there were early signs that the Department of Interior had been able to effectively use its leverage in the negotiations to secure change in areas outside of its established jurisdiction. For example, the recreation board began to allow interracial groups to meet after hours in public school buildings under its administration, a new integrated recreation center was established at a Black high school, and the National Committee on Segregation in the Nation's Capital observed in 1951 that enforcement of segregation at the district's playgrounds had relaxed.[60]

However, in other areas, segregation remained entrenched. In 1952, Secretary of Interior Oscar Chapman renewed efforts to extend the nondiscrimination policy to the district's playgrounds with the support of a brief from the Justice Department, but a federal judge in District Court rejected Interior's jurisdictional claims as "unconvincing."[61] Segregation

58 G. L. Bishop, president Consolidated Parent Group, 8 July 1949, Box 3837, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

59 Houston to Krug, 10 July 1949, Box 3837, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

60 Committee on Segregation in the Nation's Capital, 16 May 1951, Box 386, Part II:A General Office File, 1940–1955, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

61 "Fight for Lots Renewed: Interior Department Claims Sole Control," 15 March 1952; "Court Backs Playground Segregation," *The Washington Post,* Box 43, Part IX, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington,

continued in these facilities, as well as two outdoor pools run by the district, and other activities the recreation board operated off federal land. Some fields and play areas operated by the District Recreation Board were designated for White use, others for Black use, and others for "open use." Teams established in areas designated for "open use" were not permitted to play against teams from racially designated areas, whether Black or White. As Phineas Indritz observed in *The Nation* in 1952, the persistence of such discrimination continued to be a "blot on our nation" and stood in strange contrast to the nonsegregated facilities and activities in the National Capital Parks.[62] In 1952, organizations such as the American Council on Human Rights continued to call for the Department of Interior to refuse to work cooperatively with "any government agency or contracting party"—like the DC Recreation Board—which perpetuated the practice of segregation in any of its facilities.[63]

Challenges to Segregation in Virginia State Parks

Across the Potomac River, state parks in Virginia continued to be rigidly segregated. By the early 1950s, with the exception of Chopawamsic, the NPS had formally transferred the RDAs established in the state to Virginia. When Swift Creek RDA became Pocahontas State Park, the NPS secured the agreement of the Virginia Conservation Commission to continue to maintain the organized camp established there for African American use. However, the area had fallen into serious decline by 1960. An article published in the *Richmond News Leader* referred to the isolated section of the park as a "forsaken place" and conditions there were described as "deplorable."[64]

Moreover, although the 1948 lawsuit filed by Maceo Conrad Martin had forced the "equalization" of Prince Edward State Park for Negroes, African Americans continued to be excluded from all park facilities in the entire state system but these two. As in the District of Columbia, African American civil rights organizations and individual citizens continued to challenge this practice. In Virginia, a lawsuit filed in 1951 challenged the exclusion of African American visitors from Virginia Seashore State Park. The lawsuit did not seek additional equalization of the state park system. Rather, it called for the elimination of segregation itself. Ironically, the visitor cabins and facilities at Seashore had been constructed by African Amer-

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DC.

62 Phineas Indritz, "Racism in the Nation's Capital," *The Nation*, 18 October 1952, Box 386, Part II:A General Office File, 1940–1955, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

63 "Interior Will Keep the Same Fair Policy: Douglas McKay Tells ACHR Head He's for Equality," Box 43, Part IX, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

64 "Section in Pocahontas Held Deplorable," *Richmond News Leader,* 14 September 1960, as quoted in William E. O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion*, 124.

ican CCC camps working under the technical supervision of the NPS in the 1930s.[65] Indeed, the NPS had even engaged in serious conversation with state officials about acquiring the park as a national seashore recreational area.[66] These plans never came to fruition. If they had, the seaside recreational area would have been integrated by 1951. However, as a state park, even the African American CCC workers who had contributed so much to shaping the landscape and making it available to visitors were not permitted to recreate there. Norman Claiborne worked at the site between 1940 and 1942. As he recalled, Black enrollees were not permitted to go anywhere in the park other than their worksites. During his two years there, Claiborne reported that he never even saw the beach.[67]

The Seashore State Park lawsuit was filed after a series of incidents, including one involving a group of young African American campers who were confronted by a guard in the park as they passed through on a trailway located near a campground maintained by a local church. According to the Norfolk *Journal and Guide*, the campers were "rudely handled" by a "guard brandishing a gun in his zeal to enforce the regulations."[68] Just a few weeks earlier, a group of nurses on an outing sponsored by the City Health Department were denied admission to the park because two African American nurses were part of the company. In the aftermath of these incidents, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Development publicly defended its segregation policy, and asserted that no exceptions could be made to state regulations. In relation to an earlier decision that denied a request from two African American fisherman to use a canoe at Hungry Mother State Park, state park Commissioner Randolph Odell explained that if the state were "to permit one Negro to use a canoe in the park, the same would have to be done for other Negroes in this park, and for all Negroes in the other white parks." State officials suggested that the restrictions were not discriminatory because they also denied White residents permission to fish and recreate at Prince Edward State Park for Negroes (see Figure 33). The Norfolk *New Journal and Guide* noted that "statewide resentment" related to this policy would likely "boil over into a federal court test."[69]

This prediction proved prescient when Lavinia G. Tate, Samuel E. Robinson, Leon A. Woodhouse, and Otis B. Watts were also denied admission to Seashore State Park in June

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65 Work at Seashore State Park was performed at Virginia state park camps 6, 7, 8. CCC Companies 2306, 1371, 1287, 1375, and 1264 contributed to the park's development. The concentration of African American CCC camps at this site was a byproduct of the CCC's decision to place Black companies in tidewater Virginia rather than more mountainous sections of the state. See Cape Henry ECW Records in Box 226, Entry 115, RG 35, NARA, College Park, MD.

66 William E. Carson, Chair of Virginia Commission on Conservation and Development, to Secretary of Interior Ickes, 24 November 1934; Tell W. Nicolet, District Inspector, preliminary investigation for the proposed Cape Henry Seashore Recreational Area, 29 December 1934; A.E. Demaray, Acting NPS Director to Secretary of Interior, 29 July 1936; "Cape Henry Area Is Sought as Park," *Richmond Times-Dispatch,* 16 September 1936, Box 1949, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

67 Bill Lohmann, "Former Worker a Welcome Guest at Last," *Richmond Times-Dispatch,* 23 June 2011.

68 "A Situation that Should Not Exist in Virginia," *New Journal and Guide,* 26 August 1950.

69 "Segregation Enforced in State Parks," *New Journal and Guide,* 19 August 1951; "Suit Asks for Equal Use of Parks," *New Journal and Guide,* 30 June 1951.

They Can Fight — But Can't Fish!

AN EDITORIAL

Recent stories that made headline news in Virginia offer examples of the paradox that passes for "democracy" in Southern states.

Story No. 1—Army Reserve units, composed of hundreds of colored men of the Old Dominion, have been alerted for active duty. Among the units alerted and scheduled to report September 11 is the 466th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion which is considered to be in the highest state of organization of any Army reserve unit in Virginia. Pictured above in action is Battery D of the battalion.

Story No. 2—Two colored fishermen were denied the right to use a canoe on the lake at Hungry Mother State Park. Customs and regulations prohibit colored people from using Virginia state parks which have been designated "for white only." In Virginia's system of beautiful parks there is one "colored" state park. It is located in Prince Edward county.

The basic facts of these contrasting news stories establish solidly the complaints of discrimination. Even the copy boy could write this editorial: They can fight—but they can't fish!

Figure 33. This editorial signaled the growing frustration of civil rights activists in Virginia with the segregated state park system. African American residents were expected to shoulder the duties and responsibilities of citizenship, while being denied its rights and privileges. ("They Can Fight–But Can't Fish!," editorial, New Journal and Guide, 26 August 1950. Used with permission of the Norfolk New Journal and Guide, Norfolk, VA.)

1951 and they formally filed suit. Their petition contended that the state provided, maintained, and operated recreational facilities at the site from public funds and excluded Black residents "solely on account of race and color." Such action violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The plaintiffs sought a permanent injunction that would restrain the state from "denying to plaintiffs and any other Negro resident of Virginia the use and enjoy-

ment of Seashore State Park."[70] Immediately after the suit was filed, Governor John Battle publicly asserted that the state would contemplate the "abandonment of the park program in Virginia" rather than integration. This statement echoed the defiance of governors across the region as the NAACP's legal strategy challenging the constitutionality of segregation in public schools gained ground in the early 1950s. Even as Battle promised to apply the strategy of massive resistance to the state park system, he expressed his confidence that the courts would decide in the state's favor.[71]

Privately, however, Virginia Attorney General J. Lindsay Almond, Jr. was not so certain. In a remarkable letter to Virginia Senator A. Willis Robertson in 1955, Almond admitted, "we have never had any defense to the merits in the Seashore Park case." Even at the time the suit was initiated, the state was required to provide equitable facilities. "There were no public facilities for the Negroes in the area involved," the attorney wrote.[72] In federal court, Virginia officials rested their defense on the claim that beach facilities operated by the City of Norfolk for African American residents provided for Black recreational needs in the area. In a rearguard action, the Director of Conservation and Development also indicated that the state was willing to construct duplicative facilities for African American use at the park. Echoing an argument made fifteen years earlier by NPS Director Arno B. Cammerer, Director Kellam explained that the absence of facilities for African American visitors was merely due to a lack of "expressed demand."[73] By the early 1950s, however, promises of equalization were insufficient. The pending lawsuit demanded unrestricted access to all state parks on the grounds that segregation was unconstitutional.

Aware that he had little legal ground to stand on, Attorney General Almond sought to prolong the litigation as long as possible. "Fully cognizant of my plight from the standpoint of defense," he later recalled, "I was forced to conduct a delaying action."[74] Ultimately, the judge in the case delayed a decision until the litigation associated with the *Brown v. Board* decision was decided by the Supreme Court.[75] However, in the wake of the Supreme Court's 1954 determination that segregation was unconstitutional, and the application of the *Brown* decision as precedent in a Maryland case involving public parks and playgrounds in the months that followed, Attorney General Almond concluded that the state's room to maneuver

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70 "Suit Asks for Equal Use of Parks," *New Journal and Guide,* 30 June 1951.

71 "Policy on State Parks Faces Test in Courts," *New Journal and Guide,* 7 July 1951; "Battle Defends Discrimination in the South," *New Journal and Guide,* 7 July 1951; "Governor Battle's Reply—An Echo from Georgia," *New Journal and Guide,* 3 September 1951; "Virginia Park Plan in Peril, Battle Says," *Washington Post*, 29 June 1951.

72 J. Lindsay Almond, Jr. to Senator A. Willis Robertson, 22 March 1955, DR 142 F14, Robertson Papers, College of William and Mary, Special Collections, Williamsburg, VA.

73 "State Sees 'No Wrong' in Seashore Park Segregation," *New Journal and Guide*, 21 July 1951.

74 Almond, Jr. to Robertson, 22 March 1955.

75 William E. O'Brien, "State Parks and Jim Crow in the Decade before *Brown v. Board of Education*," *Geographical Review* 102 no. 2 (April 2012), 175.

had evaporated. The state's only recourse was to consider the "abandonment of the park system" and the possibility of leasing the parks to a "private interest without State supervision or control." Even so, he noted, the federal courts might issue a permanent injunction against such a deliberate attempt by the state to subvert the Supreme Court's decision.[76]

Seashore State Park closed in the summer of 1955, while other state parks throughout Virginia continued to operate on a segregated basis. State officials announced their intention to enforce their segregation policy in other parts of the system until explicitly directed by a federal court to do otherwise. When the Federal District Court in Norfolk prohibited the state from leasing facilities at Seashore to a private operator on a segregated basis, the park remained closed while state conservation officials appealed the decision.[77] Richard B. Martin commented on the results of such a policy a few years later as Virginians contemplated using the same strategy of massive resistance to avoid the integration of its public schools. The approach adopted by segregationists, he noted, was inherently negative. "Whenever tensions arise over the use of one of our social institutions, we can close them," they argued. Martin observed that the closure of Seashore State Park had denied all residents of the state the ability to enjoy its scenic beauty. The closure of other public institutions in an effort to preserve racial caste was an impediment to progress more generally, Martin wrote, and would quickly send Virginians back to the "cave man era."[78]

In November 1955, the Supreme Court affirmed the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals application of *Brown* in the Maryland park cases, and determined that segregation in public parks was unconstitutional.[79] A few months later, the Court upheld the decision of the District Court in Norfolk prohibiting Virginia's efforts to lease state park facilities to a private operator to maintain segregation.[80] Nevertheless, while Maryland desegregated its parks, Virginia maintained its intransigent position. Governor Thomas Stanley announced the state's determination to keep Seashore State Park closed rather than integrate. Other parks would remain open in the absence of further legal challenges to the state's segregation policy. Ultimately, Seashore State Park would remain closed from 1955 to 1963. The rest of the state park system was not formally desegregated until after the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.[81]

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76 J. Lindsay Almond, Jr. to Senator A. Willis Robertson, 22 March 1955, DR 142 F14, Robertson Papers, College of William and Mary, Special Collections, Williamsburg, VA. "Bias a Public Parks Outlawed," NAACP LDF press release, Box 238, Part II:A, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

77 "Negroes Win Injunction for Virginia Park Entry," *Washington Post,* 8 July 1955; "Segregation to Continue in Virginia Parks," *Washington Post,* 10 September 195.

78 Richard B. Martin, "Which Way, Virginia?" *New Journal and Guide,* 15 March 1958.

79 Frank R. Kent, Jr., "State, City Parks Are thrown Open to All in Ruling by Supreme Bench," *Washington Post,* 8 November 1855.

80 "Parks for Everyone," editorial, *Washington Post,* 14 October 1956. "Brief in Opposition to Petition for Writ of Certiorari to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit," *Department of Conservation and Development v. Lavinia G. Tate*, 1956, Box 7, Part III:J, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

81 O'Brien, "State Parks and Jim Crow," 176.

In Virginia, unlike in the District of Columbia, the NPS and Department of Interior did not attempt to intercede in the conflict surrounding segregated state recreational areas. They did not have the same leverage with Virginia state officials as they did with the DC Recreation Board, since the formal relationship between federal and state park officials had largely dissolved with the transfer of RDAs and the dissolution of the CCC in the early 1940s. Nevertheless, interpersonal connections between the NPS's regional office in Richmond and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Development persisted. In 1966, Southeast Regional Director Elbert Cox retired from the NPS and agreed to direct the Virginia Outdoor Recreation Commission. In the position, Cox was tasked with developing and implementing long-range planning related to the state's recreational areas in the aftermath of the Civil Rights Act. Cox carried his experience with the process of desegregation in the national parks with him as he moved into his new role.[82]

By the mid-1960s, Virginia's national parks no longer functioned as "jurisdictional islands" in a sea of segregation. The desegregation of Virginia's state park system in the wake of the 1964 Civil Rights Act dramatically expanded the scope of recreational opportunities available for African American residents in the state. African American travelers and park-goers throughout the region tested their ability to play, swim, fish, hike, and picnic in recreational spaces that formerly excluded them. This same process had unfolded in the national parks themselves twenty years earlier. The transition from segregated to desegregated facilities had required vigilance to ensure that the Department of Interior's nondiscrimination policy was being enforced. Similarly, rigorous enforcement of the law was required to ensure that all American citizens were able to enjoy equal access to public state and municipal park facilities regardless of race, creed, or color. As this process unfolded, in some national parks, local African American use of park facilities may actually have declined. In Shenandoah National Park, for example, local residents in Luray, VA, reported that they moved annual homecoming picnics to other local parks that were more convenient to their homes and offered a wider array of facilities, like playgrounds and swimming pools.[83] The ability to exercise this kind of recreational choice represented real progress. Nevertheless, ongoing efforts to ensure that underrepresented visitor groups—including African American visitors—had full access to and felt welcome in the national parks remained necessary to fully realize the Department of Interior's contention as early as 1945 that public parks should be available "for the benefit and enjoyment of all the people of the United States."[84]

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82 "Elbert Cox to Direct Virginia Outdoor Recreation Agency," *Richmond Times Dispatch*, 2 October 1966.

83 Krutko and Johnson, "Under the Sky All of Us Are Free," 163–164.

84 Draft Statement, Superintendent Irving Root, National Capital Parks, 12 June 1945, Box 3839, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD. NPS surveys in 2000 and 2009 identified African American visitors as "the most 'under-represented' group in both years" and captured data about perceived barriers to visitation. See Patricia A. Taylor, et al., *NPS Comprehensive Survey of the American Public, 2008–2009: Racial and Ethnic Diversity of National Park System Visitors and Non-Visitors* (US Department of Interior, 2011), 10–13,

CASE STUDY

Blue Ridge Parkway

The development of the Blue Ridge Parkway affords us with a unique perspective on the evolution of segregation policy in the NPS. Planning for major and minor developed areas along the parkway gained momentum in the late 1930s. Early iterations of park plans reflected the NPS's approach to segregating Black visitors elsewhere. In those parts of the US where segregation was custom and law in restrooms, restaurants, and schools, the NPS accommodated this local practice and segregated visitor services. The NPS adopted the "general accepted thesis" that "where colored people and white people occupy approximately the same plane in the sphere of normal everyday activities no special facilities are, or need be, provided for colored people." However, in parts of the country where segregation was enforced, Landscape Division Chief H. Thompson believed "dual facilities in our National Park and Monument areas are, or should be provided."[1]

Nevertheless, the construction of duplicative facilities was costly. NPS Director Arno Cammerer did not believe that the extent of African American visitation justified the expense. "I don't think that we are required to anticipate all kinds of service in the parks by installing facilities unless there is a demand," he wrote. "In the Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains National Parks I have always said that we have a location for colored camps in each park, but that these will not be built unless there is a proven demand therefor."[2] Consequently, under Cammerer's leadership, the NPS prioritized the development of facilities for White visitors and adopted the approach of only constructing facilities for African American visitors based on demonstrable demand. This meant that the development of African American recreational areas proceeded in the southeastern United States sporadically and unevenly, and often lagged behind the development of facilities intended for White visitors.

In light of this uneven park development, in February of 1939, the Department of Interior asked park superintendents in the southeastern states to compile statistics on the facilities available for White and Black travelers to determine if the parks were providing separate *but equal* accommodations. This survey revealed that along the Blue Ridge Parkway, White visitors had access to picnic units, camp sites, trailer units, and pit toilets, but Black

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1 H. Thompson, Chief of Landscape Division, to Chief of Planning, Status of Facilities for Colored Visitors to National Parks, 24 January 1939, Box 379, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

2 Cammerer to Demaray and Wirth, 30 September 1936, Box 17, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. See also O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion,* 80.

visitors did not. Parkway planners anticipated building comfort stations, with roughly thirty percent of the proposed stall units designated for African American travelers. They also hoped to develop two picnic areas for the use of Black motorists. Pine Spur was planned for the exclusive use of African American travelers. Segregated parking spaces were set aside for Black motorists at both the Cumberland Knob and Rocky Knob overlooks, but there were no picnicking facilities or campgrounds available for their use at either site or anywhere else in the park.[3] Construction at these areas had not been prioritized.

Separate but Equal?

In April 1939, in response to calls to equalize facilities within the southern parks, Landscape Architect Stanley Abbott noted that the "planning for recreational facilities has seemed a particularly difficult problem since the inception of the work." Taking his lead from conversations in the national office, plans for the Blue Ridge Parkway began to crystallize around several core planning principles. The Blue Ridge Parkway adopted what Abbott described as a "conservative policy" in the development of recreational areas along the roadway until visitor demand for such facilities could be determined. Abbott noted "the same or perhaps more uncertainty exists in anticipating the use of the Parkway for negroes as exists in connection with the planning for recreation of the whites," and consequently, park planners would strive to develop a "desirable minimum" of facilities for Black travelers until demand justified their extension. Although this was generally in keeping with NPS Director Arno Cammerer's preference for only constructing facilities for Black visitors in the presence of demonstrable demand, Abbott anticipated that providing accessible facilities would attract more African American travelers, and that park planners would need to distribute facilities for Black motorists along the Parkway for their convenience. Indeed, as the Parkway sought support for additional land acquisitions, Abbott believed that the need to provide duplicative recreational areas for Black visitors might provide the needed justification.[4] Parkway planners generally sought to ensure that travelers had access to gasoline service every 20 miles along the route, and recreational areas every 60 miles.[5]

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3 Accommodations for Visitors, Blue Ridge Parkway, 20 February 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

4 Landscape Architect Stanley Abbott to Mr. Vint, 7 April 1939; Abbott to Vint, 24 April 1939, Box 57, RG 7, BLRI Archives, Asheville, NC. For more on segregated park planning along the Blue Ridge Parkway, see Rebecca Jones, "Historic Resource Study: African Americans and the Blue Ridge Parkway" (2009), p. 6–13, accessed at http://npshistory.com/publications/blri/hrs-african-americans.pdf; and Stephanie Heher, "A Long Road: How Jim Crow Affected the Development and Design of the Blue Ridge Parkway" (MA Thesis: Savannah College of Arts and Design, 2018), 99–148, accessed at http://npshistory.com/publications/blri/heher-2018.pdf.

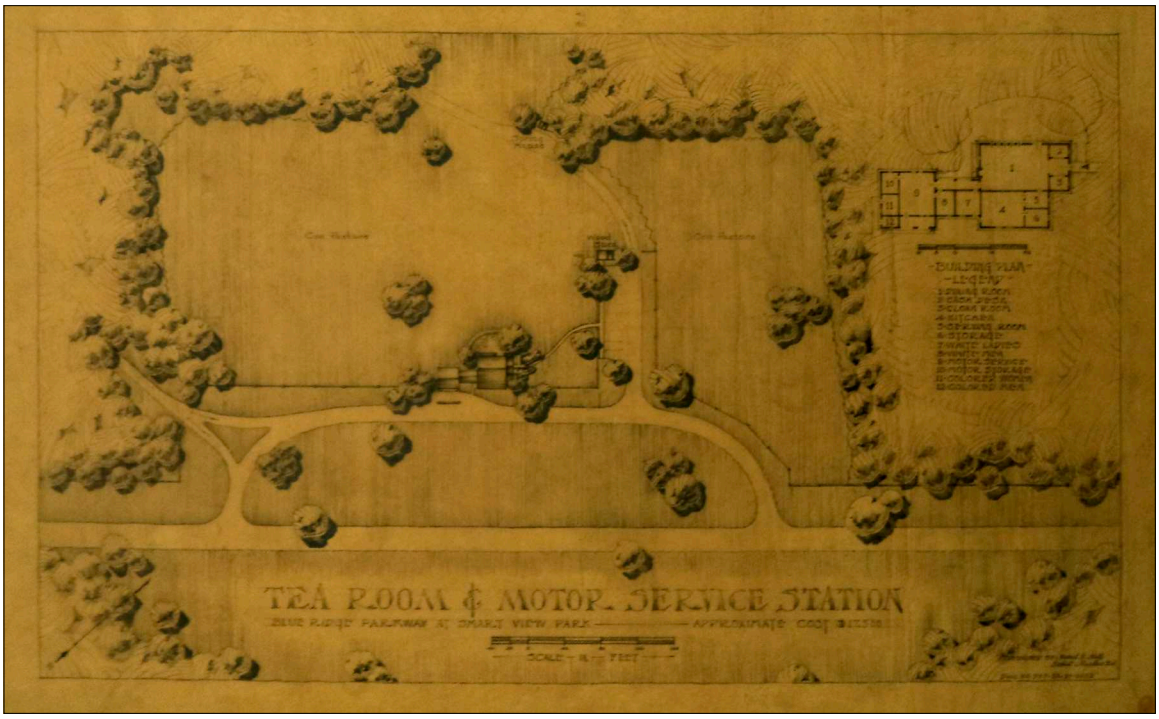
5 Report on Recreation and Service Areas: Type and Scope of Development Proposed, 15 December 1934, Box 56; Recreation and Service Areas: Progress Report to the Secretary, 15 April 1938, Box 57, RG 7, BLRI Archives, Asheville, NC.

When NPS planners had developed designs for the RDAs in the southern states in the late 1930s, they drew a distinction between smaller RDAs that would be developed for White or Black use, and larger RDAs that would be developed for dual use. In Blue Ridge Parkway, the development of minor and major developed areas followed this same pattern. Landscape Architect Stanley Abbot proposed the segregated dual use of larger picnic areas, at least temporarily, and the designation of smaller areas exclusively for White or Black use. For example, the landscape architect proposed that parts of larger established picnic grounds at Cumberland Knob and the Bluffs would be set apart for the use of Black visitors. Parkway administrators would rely on rangers to direct traffic to designated areas, until proposed areas for Black visitors at locations like Pine Spur and elsewhere could be developed. Smaller minor developed areas like Pine Spur would be "designated as all white or all negro" to minimize interaction between groups of segregated visitors. Pine Spur was prioritized for development not only for the convenience of long-distance travelers, but also to provide segregated accommodations for the "considerable negro population of Roanoke."

Park planners anticipated that concession facilities operated under contract would also be segregated. Early blueprints for motor service stations intended to be operated by a park concessionaire included clearly marked segregated restrooms with separate facilities for White women, White men, Black women, and Black men (see Figure 34).[6] However, even before some of these plans could be put in motion, the Department of Interior's approach to segregating visitors in the parks began to evolve. The Blue Ridge Parkway invited bids for concessions along the parkway twice without securing a concessionaire before turning to National Park Concessions, Inc. to develop what the NPS described as "modest and conservative day-use facilities" along the roadway like motor service stations, coffee shops, and lunch counter service for securing picnic supplies.[7] As the search for a concessionaire unfolded, Parkway staff met with Department of Interior Adviser on Negro Affairs W. J. Trent in April 1939 and agreed that "gasoline, service, and eating facilities located close to the parkway road will in all cases provide for both White and Negro use." Planners anticipated the construction of such facilities at Rocky Knob, Pine Spur, Smart View, Cumberland Knob, and the Bluffs (Doughton Park). However, the following provisions were attached to joint use of these areas. No division of service would be made between Black and White visitors at gasoline stations, sandwich shops, lunch counters, or in the sale of souvenirs. However, separate dining rooms would segregate Black and White diners for more formal meals, both inside concessions buildings and outside on terraces. At the Bluffs, park planners agreed to create designated picnic areas for Black and White visitors, but also an additional picnic area for joint use. In

6 Landscape Architect Stanley Abbott to Mr. Vint, 7 April 1939; Abbott to Vint, 24 April 1939, Box 57, RG 7, BLRI Archives, Asheville, NC. For example, see the 1936 proposal for a Tea Room and Motor Service Station at Smart View, Drawer 7, Map Case 3, BLRI Archive, Asheville, NC. Other early 1936 blueprints for the Bluffs and Rocky Knob also indicated segregated restrooms.

7 Acting NPS Director A.E. Demaray to Secretary of Interior, 26 December 1941, Box 122, RG 6, BLRI Archives, Asheville, NC.



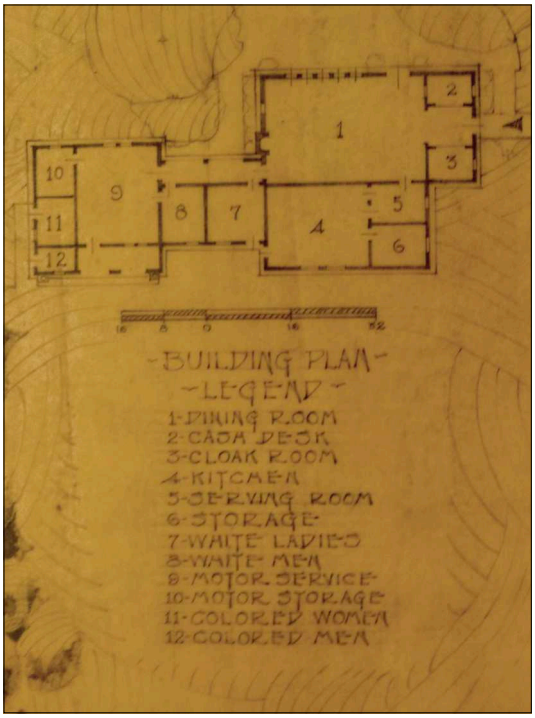


Figure 34. (Above, detail right) A 1936 rendering of a proposed tea room and motor service station at Smart View. The legend for the detailed building plan marks the location of segregated restrooms. Similar plans were developed for concessions facilities at the Bluffs and Rocky Knob. (Located in Drawer 7, Map Case 3, BLRI Archive, Asheville, NC.)

those areas along the Parkway, like concessions buildings or gas stations, where both White and Black visitors would use the facilities, newly constructed comfort stations would include common entrances. Regardless of race, visitors would enter restrooms marked for men and women with common sinks and urinals, but individual toilet stalls would be reserved for Black or White use.[8] This agreement was formally approved by Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes in May 1939.[9]

At Cumberland Knob, the impact of this agreement is evident in revisions that were

8 Demaray to Ickes, 5 May 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

9 Approved by Ickes, 12 May 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD. Approval also noted in 1939 BLRI Annual Report, Box 2717, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

made to the blueprints for the concession facility. Early plans for this concession building consisted of a kitchen for a sandwich shop, a picnic shelter, and comfort stations. The initial design proposed in 1938 included four separate restroom facilities, clearly marked for the use of "Negro Men," "Negro Women," "White Men" and "White Women" (see Figure 35).[10] However, the final design (approved in 1940) was revised to comply with the 1939 agreement. Instead of four separate restroom facilities, the concession building would include two separated by sex with stalls within the restrooms designated for the use of Black or White travelers (see Figure 36).[11] This facility opened in 1942, but due to delays in securing a concessionaire and the disruptions caused by the war, other planned concession buildings were not opened until 1949.[12]

By the end of the 1939 season, the Parkway reported that picnic facilities for Black travelers had been more fully developed at Cumberland Knob (see Figures 37 and 38).[13] Acting Superintendent Stanley Abbott seemed sensitive to the NPS national office's desire to make racial segregation in the southern parks less visible. "It is important that the Ranger Service show every courtesy to the white and negro visitors," Abbott wrote in 1940, "and effort should be made to keep white and negro visitors reasonably segregated in various use areas, but with the least possible attention being drawn to the problem." At Cumberland Knob, rather than relying on directional signs, rangers were instructed to direct African American visitors to a small picnic area with five tables set aside for their use. On crowded days, Black picnickers would be given priority to use the space; otherwise, it could be used by White visitors as well. Along other parts of the Parkway, sections of established picnic areas were not set aside. Instead, visitors were directed to specific picnic tables at the discretion of park rangers. However, in the summer of 1940, Abbott believed that segregation along the Parkway would become *more*, not less, formalized in the future. Once the planned development for Black motorists was completed at Pine Spur, he anticipated facilities at Smart View (which were being jointly used as described above) would be reserved exclusively for White travelers.[14]

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10 Drawing PKY-BR-CK-2015, Picnic Shelter Preliminary Sketch, 11 April 1938, BLRI ETS, Asheville, NC.

11 Drawing PKY-BR-CK-2015-C, Comfort Station and Picnic Shelter, approved 2 July 1940, BLRI ETS, Asheville, NC. A 1951 building survey confirms that this facility was constructed as proposed. See Cumberland Knob Concession, Shelter and Comfort Station Building File, 4 Dec. 1951, BLRI ETS, Asheville, NC.

12 J. C. Harrington, Regional Chief of Interpretation, Short History of the Blue Ridge Parkway, 9 December 1954, Box 48, RG 5, BLRI Archives, Asheville, NC.

13 Assistant Superintendent Sam Weems to Inspector Nostrand, 4 December 1939, Box 57, RG 7, BLRI Archives, Asheville, NC. See 1945 BLRI Master Plan, Cumberland Knob, Drawer 1, Map Case 2, BLRI Archive, Asheville, NC. These two areas are also denoted on the Plot Plan for the Cumberland Knob Concession. This plot plan also indicates that the third picnic area built as an extension farther away from the loop road was designated for white travelers. See drawing PKY-BR-GEN-2097, Drawer 7, Map Case 2, BLRI Archives, Asheville, NC.

14 Acting Superintendent Stanley W. Abbott, Memo for the Files, 28 June 1940, Box 2737, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

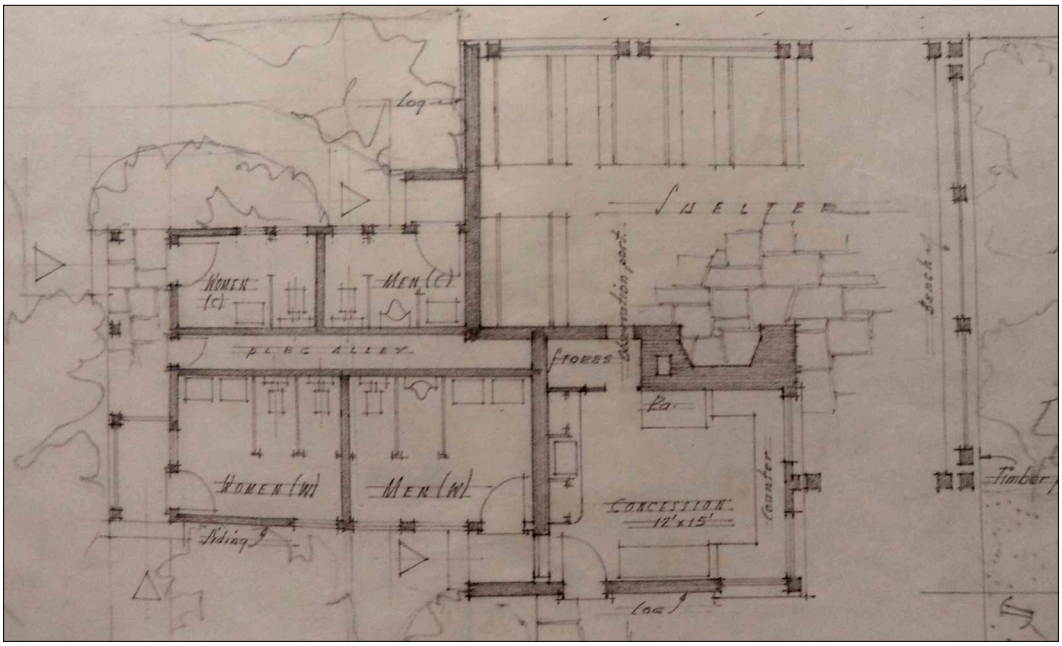

Figure 35. Preliminary sketches for the concession building at Cumberland Knob in 1938 featured four separate restrooms. Here, women and men's restrooms are marked "C" for "Colored" or "W" for "White." (Drawing PKY-BR-CK-2015, Picnic Shelter Preliminary Sketch, 11 April 1938, BLRI ETS, Asheville, NC.)

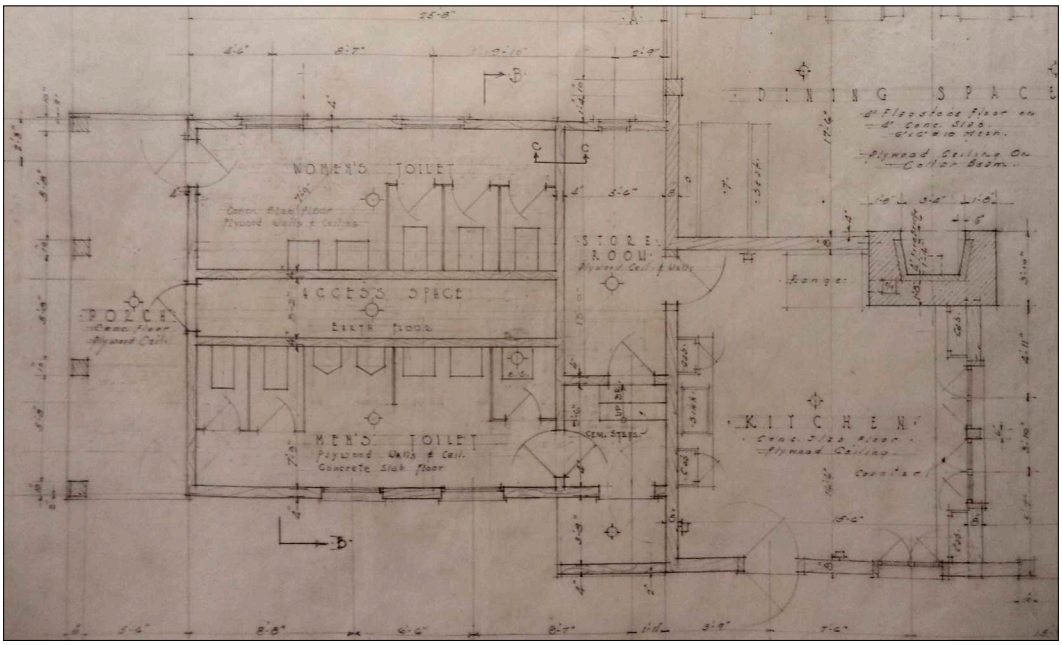

Figure 36. Plans approved in 1940 for the concessions facility at Cumberland Knob featured restrooms for men and women. The erasure of racial designations followed a 1939 meeting with Department of Interior Adviser on Negro Affairs W.J. Trent. Park planners agreed that visitors would enter restrooms marked for men and women with common sinks and urinals, but individual toilet stalls would be reserved for Black or White use.* (Drawing PKY-BR-CK-2015-C, Comfort Station and Picnic Shelter, approved 2 July 1940, BLRI ETS, Asheville, NC.)

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* Demaray to Ickes, 5 May 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

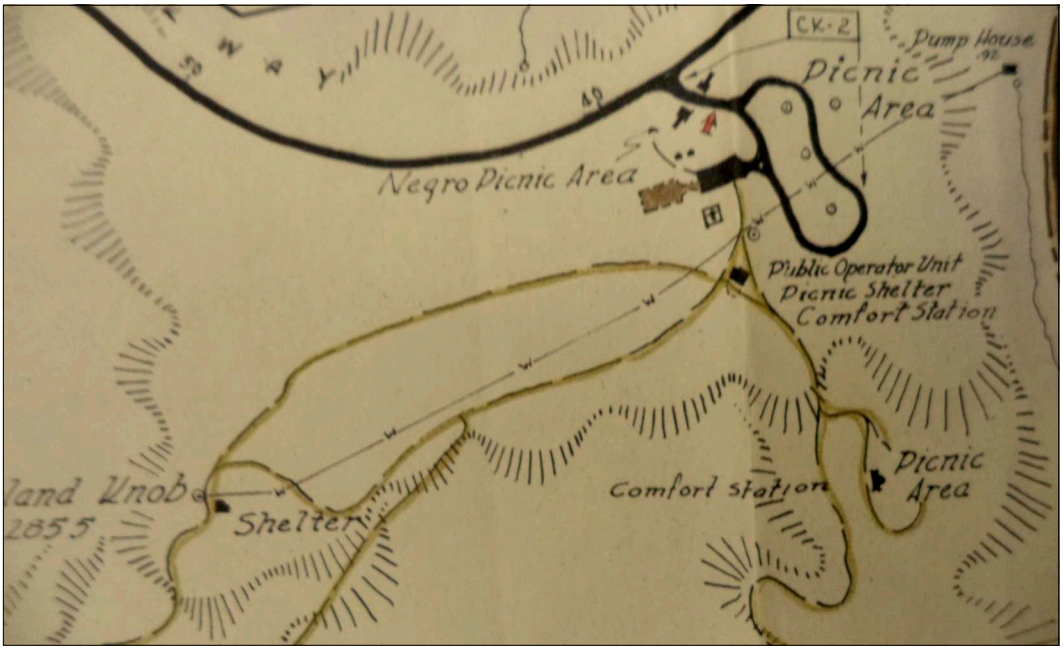


Figure 37. Detail of picnic areas at Cumberland Knob from 1945 master plan, marking the location of the "Negro Picnic Area" on the loop road. Features marked in solid black were "existing" while those in lighter brown were "proposed." (See 1945 BLRI Master Plan, Cumberland Knob, Drawer 1, Map Case 2, BLRI Archive, Asheville, NC.)

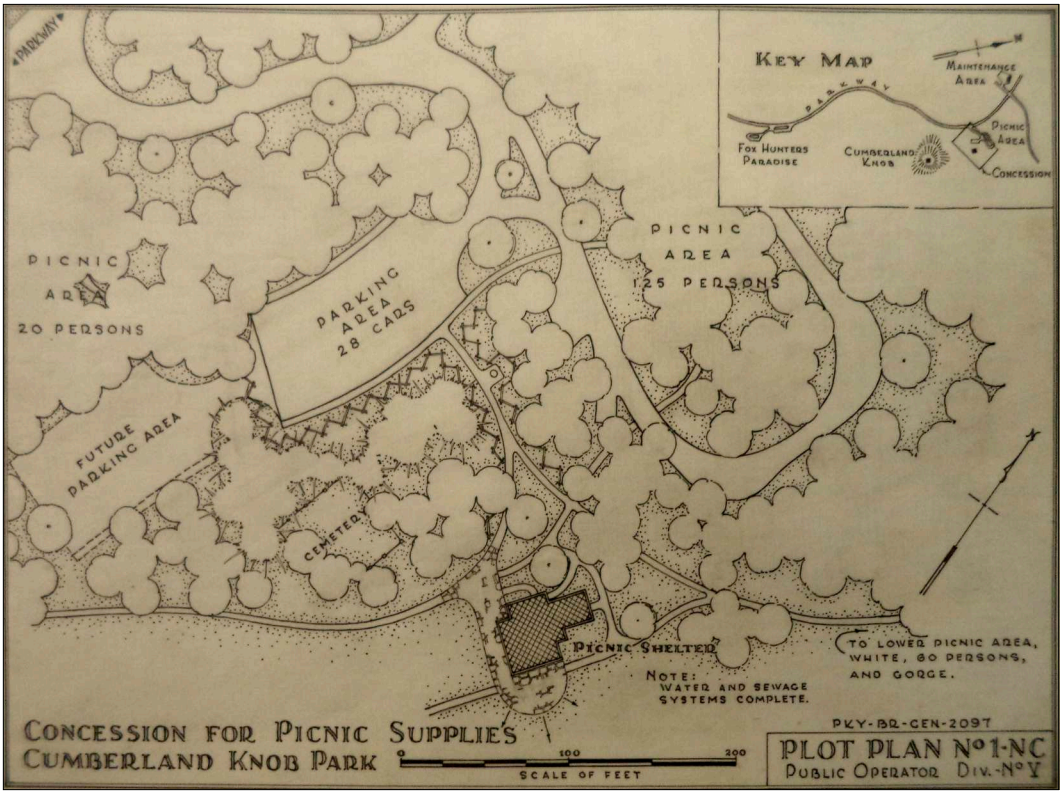


Figure 38. This plot plan from October 1945 also shows two separate picnic areas. The "lower picnic area" for sixty persons located out of the frame is also designated as a White picnic ground. (Drawing PKY-BR-GEN-2097, Drawer 7, Map Case 2, BLRI Archives, Asheville, NC.)

Early Integration and Persistent Segregation

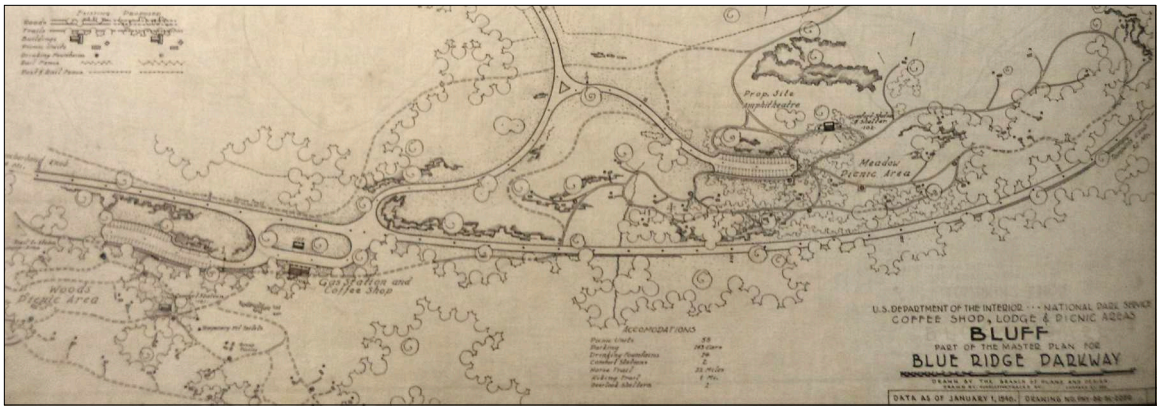
The NPS's policy of segregating visitors while seeking to minimize the use of directional signs which would call attention to this practice produced some confusion among park visitors and generated conflict along the Parkway on at least one occasion during the 1941 season. On July 27, 1941, a group of travelers who self-identified as "party of colored American citizens of Winston-Salem consisting of business and professional men and women" traveled along the Parkway and stopped at the Bluffs developed area in North Carolina. Their caravan of cars stopped near the Meadow Picnic Area (No. 3), but as they prepared to leave their cars they were approached by watchman Emerson Petty who informed them that they could not use the picnic area and directed them instead to the recently-developed Woods Picnic Area (No. 1), where a group of eight or ten tables had been designated for the use of African American visitors (see Figure 39). In a formal letter of complaint, Attorneys W. Avery Jones and Hosea V. Price noted that when they were instructed to leave the Meadow Picnic Area, none of the tables were in use. The only rationale provided for directing them elsewhere "was that we were colored people," they wrote. "We stated to this workman [Watchman Petty] that we did not believe that there was any such policy fostered by the United States Government and asked him to show us his authority for denying us the use of these tables."[15] Watchman Petty called on Warden R. Morrison King who affirmed that it was the policy of the NPS to segregate facilities and reserve some areas for the exclusive use of White visitors. Jones' and Price's party asked to be shown written documentation of the park's segregation policy, and indeed, Acting Superintendent Abbott had requested an amendment to the park's formal rules and regulations from the national office a year earlier only to be instructed to handle the implementation of the secretary's instructions administratively.[16] King later reported that the group's objections to the segregation of facilities along the Parkway rested on three claims: (1) they were US citizens entitled to use any and all facilities operated by the NPS, (2) that outdoor spaces could not be segregated, and (3) that in the midst World War II "this great Democracy must pull together and smother all racial prejudice." King suggested that the group emphasize their loyalty to the US government. "Their spokesman stated emphatically that no Negro in the United States would stoop to sabotage, espionage, or other subversive activities," he noted.[17]

When the group asked what the penalty would be for violating the policy, they were informed that they would be cited for disorderly conduct. "We informed the Warden that our party consisted of orderly, self-respecting citizens and that we did not expect to have any

15 W. Avery Jones and Hosea V. Price to NPS Director Drury, 28 July 1941, Box 2737, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

16 Acting Superintendent Abbott to NPS Director, 13 January 1940; NPS Chief Counsel G. A. Moskey to Acting BLRI Superintendent, Box 2737, Entry 10.2, RG 79.

17 R. Morrison King to Ranger Coombs, 28 July 1941, Box 2737, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.


Meadow Picnic Area
Woods Picnic Area
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR · · · NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
COFFEE SHOP, LODGE & PICNIC AREAS
BLUFF
PART OF THE MASTER PLAN FOR
BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY
DATA AS OF JANUARY 1, 1940.

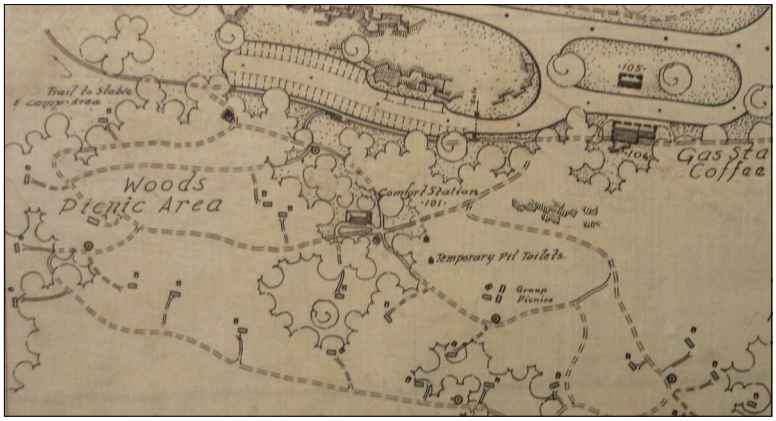


Figure 39. This map (above) highlights the relative position of the Meadow and Woods picnic areas at the Bluff. The detailed view of the "Woods Picnic Area" (right) illuminates the scattered arrangement of the picnic tables, which would have allowed park employees to maintain racial separation between picnicking parties even when both Black and White visitors were utilizing the area. (Drawing PKY-BR-BL-2050, January 1946, Drawer 1, Map Cabinet 3, BLRI Archive, Asheville, NC.)

disorder during our picnic nor would we violate any of the rules of the Parkway by leaving the grounds littered, etc.," they protested. They then suggested that they would voluntarily submit to arrest or citation in order to bring a challenge to the NPS's policy in court.[18] In his report to NPS Ranger Coombs, King suggested the group "seemed well pleased and were apparently eager to have the matter tried in Federal Court" and speculated that creating a test case might have been planned all along.[19]

Jones and Price forwarded their complaint to Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes, who acknowledged that he had approved plans for the Bluffs which included the development of three picnic areas: "one picnic area will be designated for use by colored people only, one for use by white people only, and one for use by both white and colored people." He noted that only two of these areas had been completed, and informed Jones and Price that the Woods Picnic Area, where they had been directed by the warden would be opened immediately for joint use. "Accordingly," he wrote, "a situation such as the colored people from Winston-Sa-

18 W. Avery Jones and Hosea V. Price to NPS Director Drury, 28 July 1941, Box 2737, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

19 R. Morrison King to Ranger Coombs, 28 July 1941, Box 2737, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

lem experienced on July 27 should not develop again." [20] Ickes' decision inaugurated the first integrated use of a picnic area along the Blue Ridge Parkway, and was an early extension of the experiment with desegregated picnic facilities in Shenandoah National Park. However, it is important to understand that the secretary's action was relatively modest in its impact. The immediate effect of this change was that Black visitors would have access to all the tables in the Woods Picnic Area rather than being restricted to designated tables. However, the Meadow Picnic Area Jones and Price's party had sought to use would continue to be reserved for the exclusive use of White people (see Figure 40).[21] In the aftermath of this controversy, Superintendent Abbott cautioned rangers in other parts of the park that they should continue to direct Black travelers to specific picnic units at Smart View and Rocky Knob developed areas at their discretion, and reaffirmed his previous instructions "regarding the careful and courteous handling of colored visitors."[22]

In the 1940s, plans for the parkway shifted abruptly. World War II halted development and when construction resumed, the racial landscape of the national parks had been radically reconfigured. In 1942, the Department of Interior contemplated extending an experiment with the integrated use of picnic grounds in Shenandoah National Park to other parks throughout the southeast as part of a larger initiative to boost "Negro morale" as part of the war effort.[23] At this juncture, NPS Director Newton Drury asked for a report on how the Blue Ridge Parkway was accommodating Black visitors and carrying out the Department of Interior's current policy, but implied that changes might be implemented soon. In his memorandum, Drury quoted Secretary of Interior Ickes' statement to the Office of Facts and Figures indicating that he expected to extend the nondiscrimination policy to other parks as quickly as possible.[24] At the time, Blue Ridge Parkway Acting Superintendent Stanley Abbott acknowledged that the Parkway continued "to have the caretakers or Park Wardens designate picnic units for the use of the Negro park visitors." In addition to the formally designated picnic facility at Cumberland Knob, the expansion of picnic facilities at the Bluffs by the end of June was intended to allow for the provision of three picnic areas—one for White visitors, one for Black visitors, and one for integrated use. Before construction was halted to conserve material for the war, Pine Spur Park had been nearly completed. Roads had been graded and

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20 Secretary of Interior Ickes to W. Avery Jones and Hosea V. Price, 5 August 1941, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48; Acting Superintendent Abbott to Ranger Coombs, 6 August 1941, Box 2737, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

21 This practice of racial exclusion at the Meadow Picnic Area is also an indication that the comfort station and shelter constructed on-site in 1941 was also a racially restricted facility. See Doughton Park-Meadow Picnic Area Building File, 16 November 1950, Box 70, RG 12, additional photos also located on BLRI ETS file, BLRI Archives, Asheville, NC.

22 Acting Superintendent Abbott to Ranger Garry, 11 August 1941, Box 2737, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

23 For more on this see chapter four, Civil Rights and Desegregation.

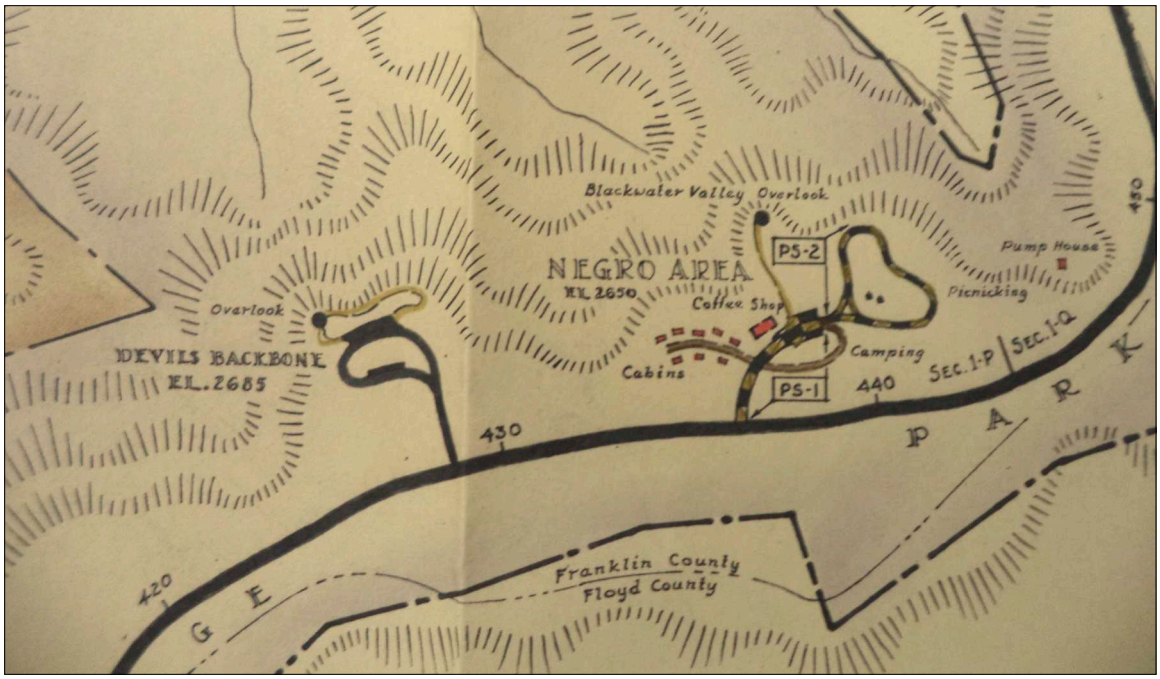
24 NPS Director Newton Drury to BLRI Acting Superintendent, 26 May 1942, Box 2737, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

Figure 40. This detail from the map of the Bluff in the 1945 master plan illustrates that although the Woods Picnic Area no longer carried a racial designation, the Meadow Picnic Area (No. 3) still was marked as "White." (Drawing BKY-BR-BL-2003, Drawer 1, Map Cabinet 2, BLRI Archive, Asheville, NC.)

surfaced with crushed stone, a picnic area with tables, fireplaces, garbage receptacles, and a play field had been developed. Pit toilets had been installed next to the site of a planned concession building (see Figure 41). All that remained to be completed was the sewer and water system and hard surfacing of the roads. Abbott noted that in the absence of a dedicated recreational area for Black visitors, African American travelers were using all parts of the park and were being accommodated. No directional signs were used, at the direction of the national office, but even in unmarked spaces more than 5,000 Black visitors a year were still being guided and restricted to specific facilities. While Abbott conceded that Pine Spur was unlikely to be completed given wartime demand for materials, he raised the question of whether or not more clearly marked segregation signs were needed in comfort stations where the NPS had not anticipated joint use.[25]

Abbott was careful to underscore that present practices along the Blue Ridge Parkway were governed by formal guidance from the national office provided in 1939, but was cog-

25 Stanley W. Abbott to NPS Director, 29 May 1942, Box 2737, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.



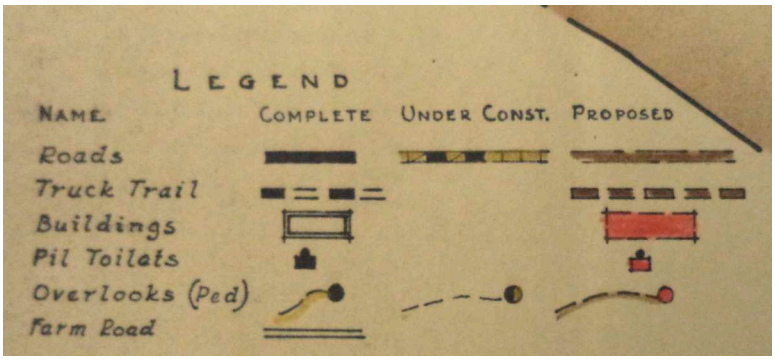


Figure 41. Details of completed and proposed development at Pine Spur from the 1945 master plan. The roadways marked as "under construction" had been treated with crushed stone, but were not hard surfaced. (Drawing PKY-BR-PS-2004, Drawer 1, Map Cabinet 2, BLRI Archive, Asheville, NC.)

nizant that policy might be shifting yet again. "In view of the importance of the segregation question to future recreational planning and present operation on the Parkway we are most anxious to have your instructions regarding our present practice and your forecast of any possible changes of policy," he wrote. As the resources available for park planning and construction were constricted during the war years, Abbott indicated a desire to develop the physical plant of the park in a way that would meet with approval for years to come.[26] Abbott's query proved prescient. After reviewing reports from superintendents throughout the region, the NPS extended the experiment in integration initiated in Shenandoah National Park to all picnic areas in 1942, and in 1945, this policy was extended to all parts of the parks operated by the NPS or by contracted concessionaires.

26 Stanley W. Abbott to NPS Director, 29 May 1942.

Postwar Planning and Visitor Facilities

In comparison to the pre-war years, after World War II parks faced constrained budgets and could no longer rely on work relief programs to provide labor for park development. In this environment, the planned development at Pine Spur for African American use remained uncompleted.[27] As Abbott returned to his role as Resident Landscape Architect in the postwar environment, he urged the park superintendent to revisit the master plan with the regional and national office as it seemed "unwise to carry out" planned developments that had been specifically designed in anticipation of segregated use of the Parkway. For example, he noted that it was "idle under existing regulations to continue to think of Pine Spur as an all-Negro development." Indeed, while Pine Spur continued to be identified as a "Negro Area" on the 1945 master plan, it was no longer marked as such on the 1946 master plan.[28] Superintendent Weems asked the regional office for clarification on whether the completion of Pine Spur was still a priority.[29] Once perceived as a necessity to provide "separate but equal" service to Black travelers, this duplicative developed area was deprioritized and was not opened to any motorists. By 1952, the existing picnic tables were removed from the site and the connection to the Parkway was obliterated to prevent incidental use. The graded roads and trails that had been paved with crushed stone were covered with weeds, and Acting Superintendent Carlisle Crouch indicated that the completion of the site was "very low in priority."[30] Its state of arrested development was an evocative symbol of the NPS's shifting priorities.

Despite changes and the integration of NPS and concessionaire facilities on the Parkway itself, it is important to note that the experience of travelers along this route remained indelibly connected to surrounding communities. Persistent complaints about unfair competition from park concessions from local businesses meant that the development of visitor facilities was kept to a "bare minimum," with the development of only modest motor service stations and a small number of major developed areas with overnight accommodation

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27 The selection of Pine Spur as a site for African American recreational use may have been guided by pre-existing racial associations. Some of the land acquired was owned by the Price Family, and in publications like *The Blue Ridge Parkway Guide*, former Park Ranger William Lord emphasized the story of "Aunt Lizzie Price" a formerly enslaved woman who lived to be 108 years of age and purchased farmland on Pine Spur with her husband in the aftermath of the Civil War. See William G. Lord, *The Blue Ridge Parkway Guide* (Asheville: The Stephens Press, 1963). See also land acquisition records for Pine Spur, Box 10, RG 7, BLRI Archives, Asheville, NC. For a photo of Price, see Jones, "Historic Resource Study" 22, 78.

28 Stanley Abbott to BLRI Superintendent, 26 April 1946, Box 2736, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. See 1945 BLRI Master Plan, Drawer 1, Map Case 2; 1946 BLRI Master Plan, Drawer 1, Map Case 3, BLRI Archives, Asheville, NC.

29 Superintendent Sam Weems to Region 1 Regional Director, 18 March 1946, Box 9, RG 5, BLRI Archives, Asheville, NC.

30 Acting Superintendent J. Carlisle Crouch to Region 1 Regional Director, 7 May 1952, Box 9, RG 5, BLRI Archives, Asheville, NC.

or full dining service.[31] Park rangers directed visitors to local restaurants and hotels by distributing brochures produced by the Blue Ridge Parkway Association.[32] But the utility of these guides was decidedly limited for Black visitors who might not be able to secure service at these establishments. Black motorists were more dependent on the service available at Parkway concessions because of the practice of racial exclusion or segregation at local restaurants and motels. The decision to limit construction of parkway concessions impacted them disproportionately.

Indeed, at least one Black motorist noted that uncertainty about the availability of accommodations in local communities along the route made him reluctant to travel to the park. Dr. DeHaven Hinkson, a prominent African American physician in Philadelphia and a veteran of both world wars, reported that he had taken a pleasant trip with his wife through Pennsylvania and that they had been tempted to "continue down into the Blue Ridge Mountain scenic routes," but had decided otherwise. "[We] were reluctant not knowing what fate we would meet for overnight accommodations and meals with privately owned motels," he wrote in 1956. Hinkson urged the Department of Interior to develop more concessions along the parkway itself. "To have government constructed motel accommodations with food service erected with taxpayers money would be but fair since customs south of the Mason and Dixon Line would leave colored motorist tourists without these comforts and accommodations," he noted.[33] Assistant Secretary of Interior Hatfield Chilson assured Hinkson that all parkway facilities were operated on a nondiscriminatory basis. "We believe you will experience no difficulty in obtaining any and all types of services furnished the visiting public in areas under the administration of the National Park Service of this Department," Chilson replied[34]. Yet, Hinkson's letter reveals the uncertainty that Black travelers faced in the Jim Crow era.

Indeed, in 1957, Virginia Congressman Tuck racialized the recurrent debate about the development of concessions along the parkway by calling attention to the integrated service provided at the proposed Peaks Lodge, a motor court at Peaks of Otter. Tuck registered his protest after the question was raised at a briefing with the Roanoke Tourist Court Association. "Every contract the US government makes has a non-segregation clause in it," Blue Ridge Parkway Superintendent Sam Weems explained.[35] Tuck was not satisfied. "Since time imme-

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31 For an example of a letter of complaint and a statement from the NPS emphasizing deference to private enterprise and limited concessions see Richard Tufts to Congressman C.B. Deane, 25 October 1949; and Acting Directory Hillory A. Tolson to Congressman C.B. Deane, 21 October 1949, Box 31, Entry 61, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

32 Superintendent Sam Weems to Region I Regional Director, 9 October 1959, Box 417, Entry 11, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

33 DeHaven Hinkson, MD, to Elmer Bennet, Department of Interior, 21 December 1956, Box 102, RG 3, BLRI Archive, Asheville, VA.

34 Assistant Secretary of Interior Hatfield Chilson to DeHaven Hinkson, 3 January 1957, Box 102, RG 3, BLRI Archive, Asheville, VA.

35 "Parkway Lodge at Peaks Will Be Non-Segregated," *Roanoke World-News,* 5 April 1957, Box 103, RG 3, BLRI Archive, Asheville, NC.

morial it has been understood that the laws of a state in which federal property is situated are binding upon those occupying said premises, even as to such minor matters as the game laws. It is a recent occurrence that the federal departments have entered executive orders undertaking to set aside the constitution and laws and customs of our people."[36] Tuck expressed his support for improving concessions along the Parkway more generally, but not the provision of integrated service. "I cannot express myself too strongly on this subject," he wrote. "The people of Virginia will not stand for integration in motels and I hope that the National Park Service will not persist in any such program or practice."[37]

In his reply to Congressman Tuck, NPS Director Conrad Wirth affirmed the NPS's commitment to nondiscrimination, but pointed to another means of resolving the controversy by falling back on the parkway's policy of minimal development. "There has been some question as to whether any overnight accommodations should be invited on the parkway," Wirth observed. Instead of an integrated lodge and motel, Wirth suggested, one might not be developed at Peaks of Otter at all. "We have always felt that only the bare necessities should be provided and that a great majority of the people will always be taken care of off the parkway." Wirth's meaning here might be read several ways. Perhaps he sought to reframe the issue by suggesting that tourism in Tuck's district might be negatively impacted if he persisted with his complaint and the lodge was not constructed. Or, perhaps he was positioning the NPS to argue that this facility was a "necessity" for Black visitors who were not accommodated off the Parkway. Indeed, the racial hostility Black travelers confronted was illuminated in the text of Tuck's complaint itself. Nevertheless, Wirth promised to consult with Tuck and other members of the Virginia delegation before moving the project forward.[38]

This debate captured the attention of local media along the Blue Ridge Parkway as residents waited to see how the controversy would be resolved. Some took issue with Tuck's claims to speak for the region. "Mr. Tuck is entitled to his own opinions," Edward Flaccus of Durham, NC, acknowledged, although he thought it was "somewhat presumptuous" of the congressman and former governor to speak for the entire state of Virginia. "My opinion is that forced segregation, within its resultant race discrimination, is morally wrong . . . it is incompatible with our Christian principles, a denial of our democratic ideals, and utterly illogical," Flaccus averred. He expressed his support for the NPS's position and hoped that it would continue to "abide firmly by those principles which all of us, black and white, North and South, know in our deepest hearts to be Good and True."[39] Similarly, Charlottesville, VA,

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36 "Tuck Attacks Parkway Plan on Integration: Tells Weems Laws of Commonwealth Should be Respected," *Roanoke Times*, 14 April 1957, Box 103, RG 3, BLRI Archive, Asheville, VA.

37 Congressman William M. Tuck to NPS Director Conrad L. Wirth, 9 April 1957, Box 103, RG 3, BLRI Archive, Asheville, NC.

38 "Parkway Motel Issue Up in Air," *Asheville Citizen,* 23 April 1957, Box 103, RG 3, BLRI Archive, Asheville, NC.

39 Edward Flaccus to NPS Director Conrad Wirth, 25 April 1957, Box 103, RG 3, BLRI Archive, Asheville, NC.

resident Thomas Kevin FitzPatrick also asserted that Tuck did not speak for "all the people of Virginia" or even all the White citizens of Virginia. FitzPatrick suggested that Tuck's protest appeared foolish since desegregated concessions were already operating successfully along the parkway in Virginia.[40] Florence Ryan of Asheville, NC, also expressed support for integrated concessions. She suggested that a lack of access to visitor facilities would spoil an otherwise pleasant travel experience. "After all, this is Federal property, paid for by the taxes of all," she wrote. "It is a pity that some would have less comfort in using it than others."[41]

However, others wrote in support of Tuck's position. Effie Carlisle of Greenville, SC, lamented, "I have been traveling and enjoying the Parkway for years and am very much disappointed to know the courts and lodges operated by the Parkway Commission will be open to Negroes." Carlisle contended that integrated use of park concessions would undercut the "high standard" of service she had come to expect along the Parkway. "I just wonder what class of white people you would expect to cater to if they are to use the same facilities with Negroes," she wrote. Carlisle maintained that she did not wish to deprive Black citizens of access to the Parkway, but felt that segregated facilities should be provided "in their own places." If the NPS insisted on integrating facilities, Carlisle maintained that she would no longer visit the park. Blue Ridge Parkway Superintendent Sam Weems expressed his dismay at Carlisle's distress but noted that the NPS's policy was "nothing new—we have been operating in this manner for a good many years" not only along the Blue Ridge Parkway but throughout the National Park System. "As nothing has changed and you have enjoyed past trips to the Parkway, I hope you will return often," he wrote.[42]

By 1962, an additional amendment to the Code of Federal Regulations required the NPS and its concessionaires to publicly post statements affirming the nondiscrimination policy and informing travelers of the prohibitions against discrimination in public accommodations, transportation, and employment.[43] For some White visitors, the notice called attention to the NPS's policy for the first time. "This sign states that there will be no segregation … and if anyone has a complaint to let you know," wrote William F.S. Gresham of Lynchburg, VA, after a visit to the Blue Ridge Parkway. "Well, I am letting you know now that I am complaining, and bitterly, about the sign, its contents, and its implications." Gresham suggests that NPS officials who promoted such a policy were a "bunch of Jews and liberals" responsible not only for "ruining" Washington but also the whole South. He asserted that the NPS's attack on established traditions in the region abetted the goals of Russian communists who sought to

40 Thomas Kevin FitzPatrick to NPS Director Conrad Wirth, n.d., Box 103, RG 3, BLRI Archive, Asheville, NC.

41 Florence I. Ryan, letter directed to NPS, 5 May 1957, Box 103, RG 3, BLRI Archive, Asheville, NC.

42 Superintendent Weems to Effie Carlisle, 15 April 1957, Box 363, Entry 11, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

43 Thomas F. Flynn, Jr., Chief of Division of Concessions Management, to Region III Regional Director, 27 April 1962, Box 70, RG 3, BLRI Archive, Asheville, NC.

undermine American society and its government. "Shame on you," he concluded in closing.[44] Assistant Director Jackson E. Price replied simply that the policy of which Gresham complained had been in place for many years and was applicable throughout the National Park System.[45]

In addition to publicly posting nondiscriminatory policies, by the early 1960s, a presidential executive order also required concessionaires to file annual reports with the Equal Employment Opportunity committee to document their compliance with these employment provisions.[46] In 1963, the Peaks of Otter Company reported that ten percent of its staff were African American.[47] In contrast, the National Park Concessions, Inc. reported that it only had White employees on staff.[48] By the late 1960s, concessionaires were required to take affirmative action to provide equal access to employment opportunity. The Peaks of Otter Company indicated that it was working with the local NAACP to actively recruit employees from the surrounding area.[49]

Evaluation of Extant Resources

At first glance, the imprint of segregation on the Blue Ridge Parkway today might seem slight. Most concession facilities in the park were developed after World War II when the parks were formally desegregated. Some planned developed areas for Black travelers never materialized. The arrested development of Pine Spur recreational area at what today is a scenic overlook tells an evocative story about shifting strategies of racial segregation and evolving NPS policy.

However, it is important to understand that formally segregated landscapes were constructed and maintained in the park. At the Bluffs, or what is today known as Doughton Park, a recently completed Cultural Landscape Report describes the segregated development of this site. As noted in the Cultural Landscape Report, the Meadow Picnic Area that was reserved for White use continues to be maintained as an active picnic ground. Many of the landscape features or structures originally constructed by the NPS at this site are still extant, including

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44 William F.S. Gresham to NPS Director, 16 October 1962, Box 363, Entry 11, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

45 Jackson E. Price, Assistant NPS Director, to William F.S. Gresham, 29 October 1962, Box 363, Entry 11, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

46 Glen T. Bean, Assistant Superintendent BLRI, to Ralph G. Webber, General Manager of the Peaks of Otter Company, 17 December 1963, Box 70, RG 3, BLRI Archive, Asheville, NC.

47 Webber to Bean, 21 December 1963, Box 70, RG 3 BLRI Archive, Asheville, NC.

48 G. B. Hanson, president and General Manager National Park Concessions, Inc., to Superintendent Sam Weems, 14 January 1964, Box 70, RG 3, BLRI Archive, Asheville, NC.

49 P. J. Morton, General Manager of the Peaks of Otter Company, to Superintendent James Eden, 25 January 1967; Houston R. Turner, NPS Deputy Contracts Compliance Officer, to Office for Equal Opportunity Director, 10 February 1967, Box 70, RG 3, BLRI Archive, Asheville, NC.

Comfort Station #102. NPS comfort stations completed at picnic areas or campgrounds where racial exclusion was practiced should also be understood to be racially segregated facilities. In this case, segregation was imposed through the practice of excluding Black visitors. In contrast, the Woods Picnic Area has been abandoned and is no longer actively managed. This site is historically significant, as it is the first site along the Parkway where the Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes insisted on integrated use of Parkway facilities after a complaint from African American visitors. Many of the extant features in this area, including Comfort Station #101 and picnic tables and fireplaces, have fallen into a state of disrepair. Although there may not be interest in restoring this site to active use, these features are clearly connected to the history of segregation and the shift toward integrated visitor services along the Blue Ridge Parkway.[50]

Similarly, the concession building constructed at Cumberland Knob in 1941 as a combination sandwich shop, picnic shelter, and comfort station is still extant.[51] This site was racially segregated, although blueprints for the building were modified, eliminating the four distinct restrooms separated by race and sex. As noted above, park records indicate that park planners reached an agreement with the national office and the Department of Interior to designate specific stalls within the restrooms for the use of Black and White travelers. This architectural modification is significant since it represents the efforts of the NPS to make segregation in the parks less conspicuous. It also ultimately enabled the Department of Interior to initiate a shift toward integrated use of these kinds of facilities without making substantial changes to the physical structure.

Notably, the strategies developed to racially separate parkway travelers in the late 1930s and 1940s also illustrate that segregation was not always imposed through permanent and clearly marked racial boundaries, but also through malleable partitions and behavioral segregation.[52] These practices were deployed along the Blue Ridge Parkway in picnic areas at Smart View and Rocky Knob, where park rangers directed Black visitors to specific tables and restricted their full use of the recreational area. Although this was meant to be a temporary practice until the planned Pine Spur Negro Area could be completed, these kinds of encounters shaped the experience of the thousands of Black visitors who traveled the Parkway in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

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50 The Jaeger Company, Doughton Park and Sections 2A, B and C Blue Ridge Parkway Cultural Landscape Report (2006), p. 42–44, 79–83, 88–92, accessed at http://npshistory.com/publications/blri/clr-doughton-park-sec2.pdf.

51 Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., Blue Ridge Parkway Survey and Assessment (2016), p. 148, accessed at http://npshistory.com/publications/blri/survey-assessment-2016.pdf.

52 Robert R. Weyeneth, "The Architecture of Racial Segregation: The Challenges of Preserving a Problematical Past," *The Public Historian* 27 no. 4 (2005): 11–44.

CASE STUDY

Colonial National Historical Park

Colonial National Historical Park was developed through the work of African American men enrolled in segregated CCC units. All of the CCC camps assigned to what was then known as Colonial National Monument were African American. At their peak, five companies that each enlisted up to two hundred enrollees were operating in the park. CCC enrollees contributed to every aspect of the park's development, including preparing the park's landscape for visitors, contributing to research programs, and constructing interpretive displays. However, once the CCC was disbanded, the ability of former enrollees to return to the park and fully enjoy the landscape they had helped to create would continue to be constrained by segregation. Park records reveal that segregated visitor facilities were provided for Black and White visitors from the park's inception, and that larger discussion about the development and use of recreational areas or the acquisition of property immediately adjacent to or within the park's boundaries was often shaped by direct or indirect reference to race in the mid-twentieth century.

Inaugurating a Segregation Policy

As the Eastern Landscape Division began to develop visitor facilities and services in NPS historic areas in the southeast, George Washington Birthplace and Colonial National Monuments became early proving grounds for the development of NPS policy which would be applied across the region. At Colonial National Monument, the first permanent structures constructed in the park were segregated comfort stations built for the convenience of visitors attending the Yorktown Sesquicentennial celebration in October 1931, an anniversary celebration which also marked the formal inauguration of the park.[1]

Engineer in Charge Oliver G. Taylor played a central role in the park's inaugural planning as both an NPS administrator and a trustee of the Yorktown Sesquicentennial Association. His earliest proposals did not include the development of any permanent comfort stations for African American use at Colonial National Monument. NPS Acting Associate Director A. E. Demaray made note of this, and while he did not challenge the perpetuation

1 Charles E. Peterson to NPS Director, 2 December 1930, Box 619, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

of segregation with the national parks, he did call on Eastern Landscape Division planners to provide "for colored people separately." Three months before the sesquicentennial, Demaray noted that the national office had just approved Colonial's plans to erect its first permanent buildings—comfort stations that would serve the public during the Yorktown Sesquicentennial and beyond—and that he and Superintendent William Robinson were in agreement that it was "absolutely essential to provide comfort stations for colored people." Demaray suggested that if the initial appropriation request did not include facilities for African American visitors, then the national monument might continue to make use of temporary pit toilets erected by the US Sesquicentennial Commission until an additional appropriation could be approved. In anticipation of the transfer of administrative authority to Superintendent Robinson after the sesquicentennial, Demaray observed, "Robinson is of the opinion that the facilities for colored people need not be as good as those we are now providing."[2] In 1896, the Supreme Court had held in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that segregation was not discriminatory provided that the separate facilities were "separate but equal." This guidance from the national office and its application in the park reveal the degree to which the NPS departed from this principle. As in so many areas of life in the Jim Crow South, the facilities constructed for African American use were underfunded and not developed to the same standard as those developed for White visitors.

For his part, Engineer Oliver Taylor suggested that Eastern Landscape Division planners had believed it was not necessary to provide any facilities at all. In his reply to Demaray, he assured the Acting Associate Director that he and landscape architect Charles Peterson had carefully considered the question of providing comfort stations for African American visitors and had discarded the idea as unnecessary. "We did not think that there was really a demand to justify a separate building," he reported.[3] However, Taylor conceded that building one African American comfort station on Church Street "would suffice" and contended "there would be no criticism on account of not having facilities for colored people at each of the other places" throughout the park. Taylor explicitly stated that the other comfort stations being built by the NPS were intended for White people and not integrated use. Those located at Moore House, he wrote, "are for white people" since they were intended to serve park personnel and incidental members of the public that might have need of such facilities. It is worth noting that Taylor's definition of park personnel and the public was racialized and imagined to be White (see Figure 42). The permanent facilities at Surrender Field were also being constructed "for the use of white people." During the sesquicentennial celebration and subsequent anniversaries, Taylor suggested that "proper provision" could be made for Black park visitors with temporary pit toilets. Within Yorktown itself, permanent comfort stations were also being built "for white people" at the Peace Monument, but Taylor contended that

2 Demaray to Taylor, 12 August 1931, COLO Administrative Files, Box A03, Yorktown, VA.

3 Colonial National Monument Comfort Station, Drawing No. COL 4017, COL 1022B, COL 1028C, COLO Administrative Files, Box A03, Yorktown, VA.

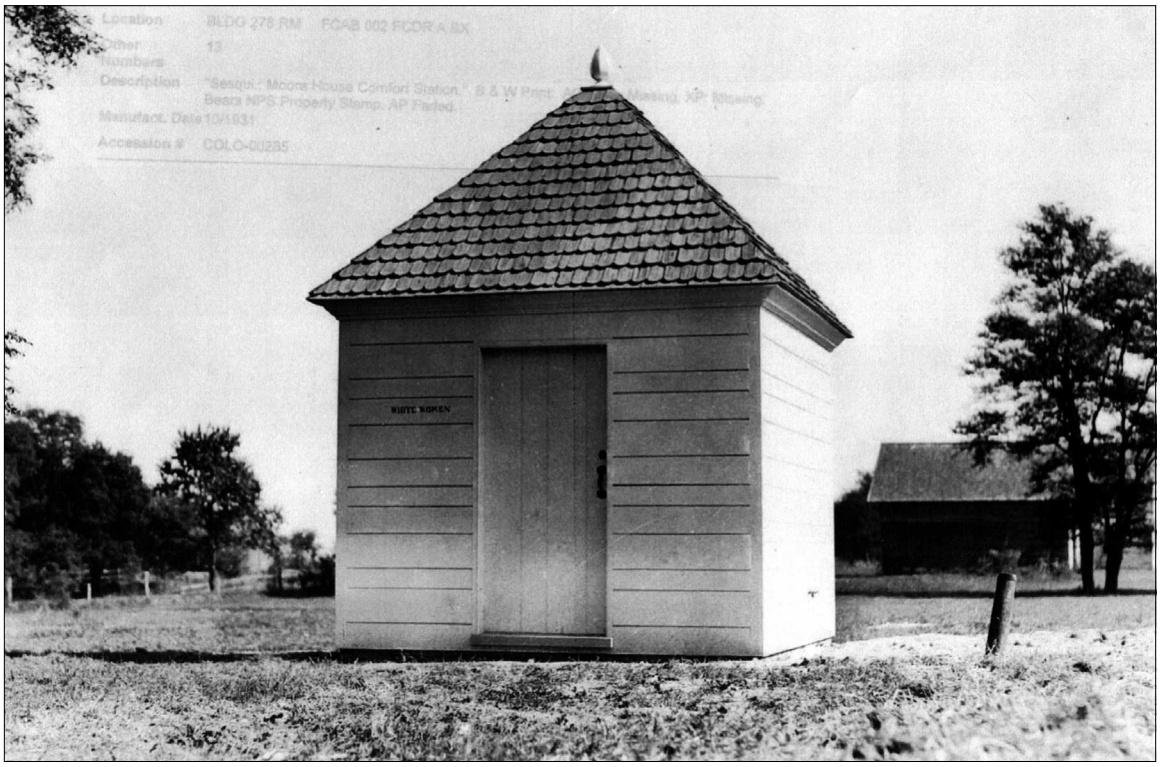

Figure 42. This comfort station at Moore House marked "White Women" is still extant and retains its original features. (COLO 112, COLO-00285, October 1931, COLO Archives, Yorktown, VA.)

Figure 43. Detail from photograph highlighting "Victory Monument Grounds Improvements" from a 1933 outline of development for Colonial National Monument. The base of the monument is in the background. This directional sign clearly marked restroom facilities for "White" and "Colored" visitors. (From the Colonial National Monument Outline of Development (1933), Box 985, Entry 11, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.)

similar accommodations were not necessary for African American visitors because of low demand. "There are very few colored people stopping at the Peace Monument," he wrote. "There are five hundred white people who visit this monument to one colored" (see Figure 43). When park officials advanced this kind of argument, they did not acknowledge how the lack of adequate visitor facilities and the practice of segregation itself may have suppressed African American visitation.

Taylor contended that the proposed Church Street comfort station "for colored people" was centrally located and would not inconvenience Black visitors. It could be connected to the same sewage disposal system as the White comfort station planned in the same location.[4] Moreover, he contended that it was not necessary to request an additional appropriation from Congress to build this single comfort station. Taylor anticipated that the monument would be able to build the six proposed White comfort stations under budget and use the remainder to construct a facility for African American visitors. If this was not possible, Taylor proposed the conversion of a restroom located in the back of the NPS garage across the street.[5] Indeed, when the NPS solicited bids for the construction of comfort stations at the monument in late August 1931, it did not include the proposed "Negro" comfort station.[6] Nevertheless, as predicted, the low bidder came in sufficiently under budget and Taylor reported back to the national office that the monument "shall proceed to construct a permanent comfort station for colored people here in Yorktown" with the remainder.[7] However, when the NPS opened bids for the construction of this specific facility, the two bids that came in were $3200 and $3300, nearly double the proposed cost of $1500. Taylor was frustrated that both contractors–including the construction company building the White comfort stations–had provided "an exceptionally high figure."[8] The NPS moved forward with construction of the "Negro comfort station" by hiring local day laborers from Gloucester Point, VA.[9] Taylor suggested that the constructed building would mirror its White counterpart in terms of its exterior features, but noted that interior furnishings and fixtures would be altered to keep costs as low as possible.[10] Photographs suggest that the "Negro comfort station" was smaller than the "white comfort station"; it had similar siding and roofing material, but it was not

4 Taylor to NPS Director, 15 August 1931, COLO Administrative Files, Box A03, Yorktown, VA.

5 Taylor to NPS Director, 15 August 1931.

6 Construction of Six Comfort Stations and Four Sewage Disposal Systems at Yorktown, Virginia, Under Appropriation 41/2440, COLO Administrative Files, Box A03, Yorktown, VA.

7 Taylor to NPS Director, 25 August 1931, COLO Administrative Files, Box A03, Yorktown, VA.

8 Taylor to NPS Director, 13 September 1931; Taylor to Allen J. Saville, Inc., 11 September 1931, COLO Administrative Files, Box A03, Yorktown, VA.

9 Demaray to Taylor, 23 September 1931; Reno E. Stitely, Chief Clerk, to Mr. M.E. Fields, 2 December 1931, COLO Administrative Files, Box A03, Yorktown, VA.

10 Taylor to NPS Director, 13 September 1931; Taylor to Allen J. Saville, Inc., 11 September 1931, COLO Administrative Files, Box A03, Yorktown, VA.

outfitted with decorative shutters (see Figure 44).[11] While interior photographs are not available, the superintendent's reports indicate that plastering and other finishing work was not completed until late in 1932.[12] Ultimately, the African American comfort station was completed for approximately $1400, while White comfort stations were constructed for approximately $2700, pointing to differentials in the quality of the finishing and formality of labor contracts.[13]

These comfort stations were prepared for use immediately before the Yorktown Sesquicentennial. The single comfort station provided for African American citizens by the NPS would have been wholly inadequate, and likely was supplemented with segregated temporary pit toilets dug specifically for the anniversary celebration. The concessionaire providing food to those assembled for the occasion reported hiring more than four hundred African American men and women as staff to prepare and serve upwards of seventy-five thousand meals while attired in colonial dress. Male "help" were housed in tents on-site throughout the celebration, while women were accommodated in area homes.[14] For African American visitors seeking meals and refreshment, the Yorktown Sesquicentennial Association (YSA) directed the concessionaire to erect a separate tent "in which meals for colored visitors to the celebration could be served." Likewise, the association set aside five hundred seats in the grandstand

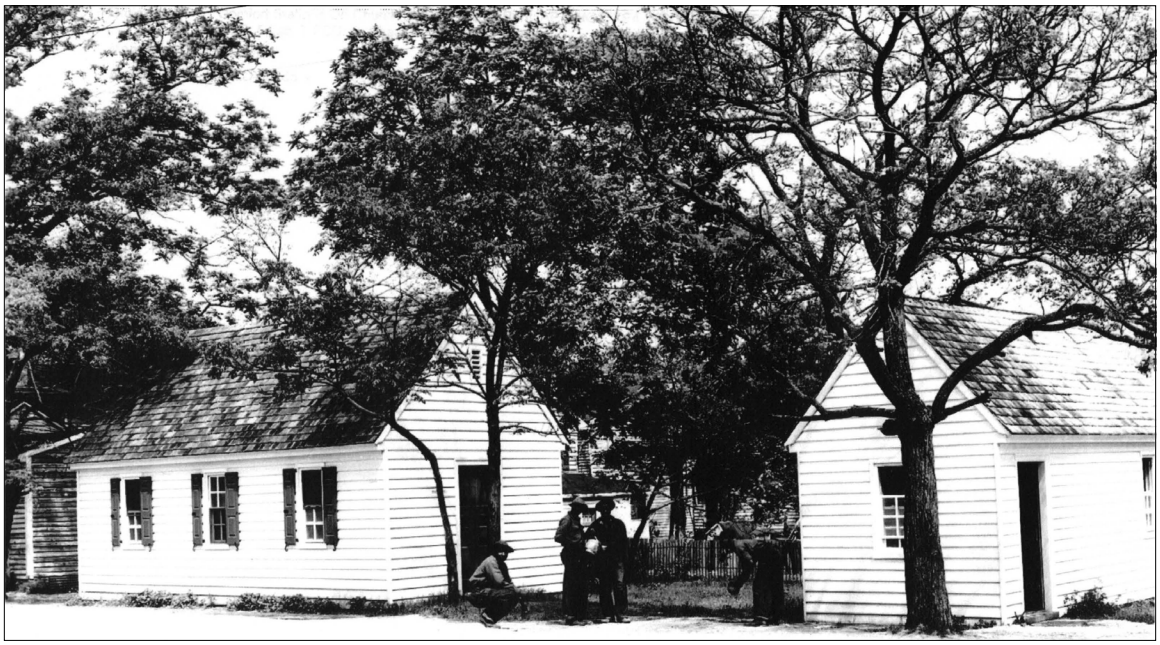

Figure 44. Comfort Stations on Church Street. The comfort station to the left was designated for the use of White visitors and is still extant. The comfort station to the right was constructed for African American visitors and no longer stands. (COLO 2735, COLO-02285, May 1935, COLO Archives, Yorktown, VA.)

11 "Comfort Stations on Church Street," May 1935, COLO-00285, Yorktown, VA.

12 Superintendent's Monthly Reports, November and December 1932, 1932 Bound Volume, Yorktown, VA.

13 COLO Outline of Development (1932), p. 34–36, Box 985, Entry 11, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

14 W. M. Cease, Melba Delicatessen, to Hon. Otis Bland, 8 March 1932, Box A14, COLO Sesquicentennial Association Records, Yorktown, VA.

for African American participants, in compliance with the Virginia Massenburg Assemblage Act (1926), which required segregation in places of public assembly with fixed seating. This "Negro section" would be "separated by a rail from the seats for white people and a separate entrance for the Negroes will be provided" (see Figure 45).[15] Even African American men who had been elected to serve as honorary trustees by the YSA, like Dr. Robert Russa Moton of Tuskegee Institute or Archdeacon Dr. James S. Russell of St. Paul's Normal and Industrial School, were required to sit in this section.[16] The YSA also sought to incorporate Hampton Institute's choir into the celebration program, although the association discouraged their performance of "classical" music, presumably preferring spirituals or popular music instead.[17]

Figure 45. View of the grandstand at the 1931 Yorktown Sesquicentennial Celebration. The grandstand featured segregated seating for African American attendees. Five hundred seats were separated from those designated for the use of White participants by a rail. (Colonial National Monument Outline of Development (1933), Box 985, Entry 11, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.)

15 YSA Trustees Meeting, 30 June 1931, Box 79, RG 18, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA; YSA Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, 20 August 1931, Box A15, COLO Sesquicentennial Association Records, Yorktown, VA.

16 Robert Russa Moton to William A.R. Goodwin, 3 March 1931; William A.R. Goodwin to Archdeacon James S. Russell, 10 October 1931, Box A14, COLO Sesquicentennial Association Records, Yorktown, VA.

17 YSA Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, 20 August 1931, Box A15, COLO Sesquicentennial Association Records, Yorktown, VA.

Park Development and CCC Contributions[18]

After the Yorktown Sesquicentennial, the development of more robust interpretive facilities and conveniences for visitors was accomplished largely through the New Deal CCC program (1933-1942). CCC enrollees lived in camps operated and maintained by the military, but were supervised in the field by representatives of the technical branches like NPS employees. CCC units were segregated, and African American camps were often placed in areas with higher proportions of Black residents in the surrounding community.[19] African American CCC camps were also frequently placed on federally-owned land, and as a result, a disproportionately high number of Black CCC camps were situated within national parks.[20] In Virginia, this meant that the highest concentration of African American CCC camps in the state were located at Colonial National Monument, with four placed at Yorktown. The fifth camp was located in Williamsburg and enrollees were transported to Jamestown daily for their work projects. One of the camps at Colonial was a "colored veterans" camp. In the early years of the program, enrollees at Colonial came from states like New York and New Jersey as well as Virginia. In 1935, CCC Director Fechner established a policy which generally restricted the placement of Black CCC camps to their own states of origin. Consequently, the composition of Colonial's camps shifted. For example, Company 247 was replaced by Company 2303, which enlisted local men from Hampton Roads.[21] In October 1937, the staff of Company 2303's newspaper welcomed "rookies" from Williamsburg itself and the surrounding vicinity.[22]

Work crews organized under leaders and assistant leaders made innumerable contributions to the development of Colonial National Monument. CCC companies created the truck trails that provided access to the farthest reaches of the park and even dug the marl that was used to pave them (see Figure 46).[23] They also completed fine grading on the entirety of the Colonial National Parkway, largely by hand. The CCC was a work relief program, so most

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18 For more information about the experiences of African American enrollees and efforts to secure opportunities for advancement within the CCC at Colonial National Monument see chapter two, Emergency Conservation Work.

19 Salmond, "The Civilian Conservation Corps," 92. Robert Fechner to Senator Robert J. Buckley, 4 June 1936, General Correspondence of the Director, Box 700, RG 35, NARA, College Park, MD.

20 Paige, "The Civilian Conservation Corps," 94. See also Allen F. Kifer, "The Negro under the New Deal—1941" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, 1961), 32.

21 Company 247 was moved back to Camp Dix in New Jersey. See "Many Regrets as CCC Camp Leaves Williamsburg, VA," *New Journal and Guide,* 13 July 1935, 10; "New CCC Company in Williamsburg Camp," *New Journal and Guide,* 17 August 1935, 4.

22 "Will Welcome 'Rookies,'" *Jamestown Excavator* 2 no. 1 (15 October 1937): 2, Library of Virginia CCC Newspapers.

23 M. A. Acree, Project Superintendent, "Emergency Conservation Work, Camp NM-4, CCC Co. 247, Narrative Report, July, August, and September" 1934; E. A. Gissy, Project Superintendent, "Report on Activities for Camp NM-1, CCC Co. 352, for the quarter January 1, 1935 to March 31, 1935," Box 31, Entry 96, RG, 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

Figure 46. Enrollees in Company 352 excavating marl by hand. This marl was distributed on truck trails throughout Colonial National Monument. (From "Report on Activities for Camp NM-1, CCC Co. 352, for the quarter January 1, 1935 to March 31, 1935," Box 31, Entry 96, RG, 79, NARA, College Park, MD.)

jobs were completed with the most rudimentary tools and manual labor; using labor-saving machinery was beside the point.[24] Company 323 transplanted specimen trees along the parkway according to the specifications of landscape architects who carefully crafted scenic vistas for the pleasure of motorists. By 1935, Project Superintendent Woodward reported that the company's efforts were evident in the proliferation of blooming dogwoods and redbuds along the drive. "Everyone who uses this portion of the Parkway has been unstinting in praise of its loveliness and as its reputation spreads, more and more people have been drawn down to see it," he commented.[25] Other scenic improvements were made as well. Company 352 took primary charge of removing dead wood from lakes and other waterways. Work crews also strove to minimize fire hazards by removing dead trees in the forest stands, and repurposing the fallen trees as lumber for buildings in camp and throughout the park area (see Figure 47).[26]

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24 S. M. Woodward Jr., Project Superintendent, "CCC. Co. 323, NM-2, Colonial Nat'l Mon., Yorktown, VA, Sup'ts' Narrative Report for Fifth Enrollment Period," October 1935, Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

25 S.M. Woodward Jr., Project Superintendent, "CCC. Co. 323, NM-2, Colonial Nat'l Mon., Yorktown, VA."

26 E.A. Gissy, Project Superintendent, "Report of Activities for Camp NM-1, CCC Co. 352, for the period of Oct. 1, 1933 to Mar. 31, 1934," Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

Company 2305, one of only a handful of Navy camps, developed a specialization in erosion control, dramatically reshaping the banks of the York and James Rivers that butted up against park property. Again, this work was principally done by hand (see Figure 48).[27]

Enrollees also helped to uncover, reconstruct, and preserve the history of the colonial experience at Yorktown and Jamestown. Company 247 participated in early archeological investigations at Yorktown until they were transferred to Camp Jamestown to do similar work at the other end of the monument. Superintendent Acree described the work as "slow, painstaking, and tedious," yet he was gratified to "see the interest that the men take in the project." Eight men in the company helped process artifacts in the laboratory, cleaning, sorting, counting, and mending pottery shards. Acree reported that these men displayed "remarkable quickness in grasping the methods and applying them," and were so absorbed in their work that they sometimes almost missed dinner call. Archeological Foreman Walter Flickinger also commended the men on their growing familiarity with the material culture associated with seventeenth century Virginia (see Figure 49).[28] Similarly, at Yorktown, Senior Foreman Farthing supervised thirty to forty men engaged in field excavation. He praised the skill of veterans from Company 1351, particularly their ability to identify post holes and fence lines by carefully observing the changing shades of soil.[29] Through their collective efforts, CCC enrollees made significant contributions to the archeological collections of Colonial National Monument. In addition to the ongoing excavations, Company 352 participated in a salvage operation which recovered materials from a British man-of-war sunk in the York River. Project Superintendent Gissy described the excellent preservation of many of the metal, wood, and leather artifacts and asserted that the "priceless relics" recovered would "add untold value to the museum collection."[30] Skilled carpenters in Company 1351 built exhibit cases to house these artifacts and display them in a replica of the captain's quarters.[31] This veterans' camp also helped to restore the French Battery on the battlefield. NPS officials noted that the veterans' familiarity with military fortifications was a valuable asset in the completion of this task.[32]

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27 "History of Company 2305" and "Did You Know," *Ship Ahoy*, 10 February 1936, CCC Co. 2305; "A Poem," *Jamestown Excavator*, 26 August 1938, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA; W.H. Underwood, Project Superintendent, "Report on Activities for Fifth Enrollment Period."

28 M. A. Acree, Project Superintendent, "Emergency Conservation Work, Camp NM-4, CCC Co. 247, Narrative Report, July, August, and September" 1934; "Emergency Conservation Work, Camp NM-5, CCC Co. 247," January 1 1935, Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

29 A. E. Booth, Project Superintendent, "Report on Activities for Camp NM-4, CCC Co. 1351, for the quarter January 1, 1935 to March 31, 1935," Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

30 E. A. Gissy, Project Superintendent, "Report of Activities for Camp NM-1, CCC Co. 352, for the quarter October 1, 1934 to December 31, 1934," Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

31 Booth, "Report on Activities for Camp NM-4, CCC Co. 1351."

32 Booth, "Report on Activities for Camp NM-4, CCC Co. 1351." See also "Camp Superintendent's Narrative Report for the quarter of October 1, 1934 to December 31, 1934, CCC Co. 1351, NM-4" and "Report on Activities for Fifth Enrollment Period."

Figure 47. Young enrollees in Company 352 demonstrating the size of the root ball of a tree they had removed from a lake in the park. (From "Report on Activities for Camp NM-1, CCC Co. 352 for the quarter July 1, 1934 to September 30, 1934," Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.)

At Jamestown, enrollees in Company 2303 helped to construct and build a new museum facility which opened to visitors in 1938. The *Jamestown Excavator* reported that visitors were encouraged to observe the enrollees at work in the laboratory associated with the facility. "After the tourist[s] have gone through the museum itself, they are directed by signs to the laboratories, where they are allowed to look through the windows and see what is going on inside," the paper noted. "At present the chief attraction is enrollee Alton Burke, who is doing all sorts of work there from washing the artifacts which are brought in from the excavations, to putting together pottery which has been found." Visitors were also invited to observe the excavations in progress, and could watch Assistant Leader Odell Price and his crew as they were "busily engaged in looking for the remains of one of the houses of Old Jamestown."[33]

33 "Museum Opens," *Jamestown Excavator,* 16 June 1938, CCC Co. 2303, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

Figure 48. Here, enrollees in Company 2305 grade a sandbank in an effort to control erosion at Colonial National Monument. (Image courtesy of Colonial National Historical Park, Colonial National Monument Parkway Erosion Control, Grading Slope Prior to Placing of Sod to Prevent Soil Erosion, Sept. 1935, COLO 2962_3039).

Figure 49. Enrollees in Company 247 working in the archeology lab at Jamestown. Both the project superintendent and foreman commented on the deep engagement and skill of the men involved in this work. (Image courtesy of Colonial National Historical Park, archaeology lab workers from ECW Camp NM-5, Narrative Report for Fifth Period, 1935, COLO 2.)

CCC enrollees also helped to construct other facilities for visitors in the park, including educational contact stations.[34] They maintained picnic areas and other public grounds without direct supervision from NPS foremen. Project Superintendent Gissy noted that the grounds maintenance crew was "supervised by a very able and trustworthy colored leader" and often worked in close proximity to the public.[35] However, although enrollees were clearly visible to visitors within the park, they were discouraged from having direct contact with them. Before 1935, the small number of White LEMs who were associated with the Black companies at Colonial National Monument provided basic visitor services under the guidance of the chief ranger. When Director Fechner ordered the stricter segregation of the camps, White LEMs assigned to Colonial left the park. Rather than reassigning Black enrollees to these tasks, education and contact station work was abandoned all together.[36]

Indeed, opportunities for White and African American CCC enrollees were not distributed equally. The CCC had only reluctantly appointed Black educational advisers and military reserve officers to positions of authority as chaplains and medical doctors. With the exception of Camp 1355 in Gettysburg National Park, positions as project superintendents and foremen had been reserved for White men, limiting opportunities for African American men to transition permanently into the technical branches. This practice had long-term effects on the diversity of NPS personnel. In 1942, the newly established Fair Employment Practice Committee surveyed the Department of Interior's workforce and found that only 1.6 percent of its employees were African American. At Colonial National Historical Park, where thousands of enrollees helped to reshape the landscape over the course of nearly a decade, only six African American men continued to work in the park after the close of the CCC camps, as unskilled day laborers compensated at two or four dollars per day.[37]

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34 E. A. Gissy, Project Superintendent, "Report of Activities for Camp NM-1, CCC Co. 352, for the quarter July 1, 1934 to September 30, 1934," Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

35 E. A. Gissy, Project Superintendent, "Report on Activities for Camp NM-1, CCC Co. 352, for the Fifth Enrollment Period, April 1, 1935 to September 30, 1935," Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

36 S. M. Woodward Jr., Project Superintendent, "CCC. Co. 323, NM-2, Colonial Nat'l Mon., Yorktown, VA, Sup'ts' Narrative Report for Fifth Enrollment Period," October 1935; E. A. Gissy, Project Superintendent, "Report on Activities for Camp NM-1, CCC Co. 352, for the Fifth Enrollment Period, April 1, 1935 to September 30, 1935"; M. A. Acree, Project Superintendent, Narrative Report for Camp NM-5, CCC Co. 247, October 1935, Box 31, Entry 96, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

37 Lawrence W. Cramer, Executive Secretary President's Committee on Fair Employment Practice, to Secretary Harold Ickes, 22 August 1942; Acting Superintendent J.C. Harrington, Colonial National Park, to NPS Director, 1 December 1942, Box 254, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

Visitor Facilities and Concessions

Before World War II, NPS staff at Colonial National Monument worked with a local concessionaire, the Colonial Park Company, Inc., to provide basic services to visitors. At Jamestown, this relationship was complicated by the presence of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA) on the island. The APVA sold souvenirs to visitors, and while they did not oppose the presence of a food vendor on NPS property, they repeatedly objected to the sale of souvenirs by the Colonial Park Company that might undercut their own revenue.[38] The Colonial Park Company established a food concession directly in front of the Jamestown archeological museum in 1936. Visitors could purchase sandwiches, pastries, drinks, and ice cream.[39] The small proportions of this facility suggest that if on-site dining was available, it would have been limited. At other park concessions located in Virginia during this era, African American visitors were provided with takeaway service or limited service at lunch counters, but encountered strict segregation in more formal sit-down service. Notably, the color line was clearly maintained in other visitor facilities provided on Jamestown, including comfort stations, which separated visitors by both sex and race (see Figure 50).[40]

The Colonial Park Company found it difficult to turn a profit at Jamestown, in part, because of restrictions placed on their ability to sell souvenirs. With decreased recreational travel to the parks during World War II, the sandwich shop at Jamestown Island closed and the Colonial Park Company relinquished its contract.[41] Left vacant, the concession building fell into disrepair and despite expressed interest from other local entrepreneurs, the NPS was not inclined to reopen the facility after the war, particularly since it sat directly in front of the Jamestown Museum and detracted from the historical atmosphere.[42] Instead, in the postwar years, staff at Colonial opened up a conversation with the APVA about the possibility of selling light refreshments in addition to souvenirs on the part of the island under their administrative control. While the APVA recognized the demand for refreshment at the relatively isolated site, they demurred.[43]

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38 Superintendent Elbert Cox to NPS Director, 9 June 1939; Ellen Harvie Smith, APVA, to A. E. Demaray, 30 May 1940, Box 1986, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

39 Schedule of Basic Rates, Colonial Park Company, Inc., COLO, 1940 Season; Newton B. Drury, NPS Director, to Secretary of Interior, 17 September 1942, Box 1989, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

40 Jamestown Comfort Station Being moved, Photograph, COLO 7503, 9 April 1941, Yorktown, VA.

41 George P. Coleman to Superintendent Elbert Cox, 7 April 1941; L. R. O'Hara to J. C. Harrington, COLO Superintendent, 10 March 1944; Memorandum of the Secretary of Interior, 2 August 1945, Box 1989, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

42 Acting Director A.E. Demaray to Region I Director, 7 September 1940, Box 1989, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. Regional Director Thomas J. Allen to Ellen Bagby, 30 March 1949, Box A06 871, COLO Administrative Files, Yorktown, VA.

43 Ellen M. Bagby, APVA to Superintendent Edward Hummel, 12 April 1947, A06 871, COLO Administrative Files, Yorktown, VA. APVA to Regional Director Thomas Allen, 15 March 1949; Thomas J. Allen, Regional Director, to Ellen M. Bagby, Chair of APVA Jamestown Committee, 30 March 1949; Elbert Cox, Associate

Figure 50. The comfort station on Jamestown Island was relocated in April 1941. The two doors on the gable-end serviced men's restrooms segregated by race. A smaller sign to the left directed women around the other side of the building. (COLO 7503, COLO-00285, April 1941, COLO Archives, Yorktown, VA.)

Although NPS correspondence with the APVA about the provision of food and drink on Jamestown Island made no direct reference to race, this conversation unfolded in the aftermath of the adoption of the NPS's desegregation policy for park concessionaires in 1945. A concession facility reopened and operated on the NPS side of the island would have been required under federal regulations to provide nondiscriminatory service, while a concession facility operated by the APVA during the 1950s almost certainly would have operated according to Virginia law and custom. As historian James M. Lindgren has argued, the APVA worked to preserve a traditionalist culture in the state as well as historic sites and landscapes. They framed Jamestown as a nationally significant site, not only as the first seat of representative government in British North America but also as the cradle of White Anglo-Saxon culture in the New World. In 1916, for example, the APVA rejected a request from the Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute to erect a monument to the first African arrivals at Jamestown. "James-

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Regional Director, to Congressman Schuyler Otis Bland, 1 April 1949 Box 1989, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

town was the first permanent Colony of English speaking people in this country, and its history is associated always with that fact," they explained. With the total disregard for the African American half of the colonial population in the region, they wrote, "The incident of bringing the negroes by the Dutch ship to Jamestown forms no such part in the life of the colony as will justify our granting permission to erect a memorial to mark that event." The site was suitably recognized, they suggested, by a marker placed by the US government in 1907 that identified it as "Jamestown, the First Permanent Colony of the English People, the birthplace of Virginia, and of the United States." Although the APVA employed African American caretakers like Sam Robinson to interpret the churchyard for visitors, official guidelines barred groups of African American tourists. "Negro excursions or picnic parties are not admitted," they read.[44]

In the 1950s, when Colonial National Historical Park considered the possibility of establishing informal dining facilities at Yorktown Beach and inside Swan Tavern, Colonial Superintendent Stanley Abbott openly speculated about whether the park would be able to secure a concessionaire "under current Federal policy." As the NPS contemplated the provision of light refreshments at Swan Tavern, he believed "the problem of integration" would restrict their ability to find a willing concessionaire.[45] On Jamestown Island, the NPS might have been able to conveniently sidestep this perceived problem under the umbrella of their cooperative agreement with the APVA.

At Yorktown, the NPS sought to clearly demarcate the use of recreational areas on federal land. Even as the monument was being established, park planners sought to maintain the racial segregation of local swimming beaches. In the early 1930s, African American swimmers had begun to use "the river beach opposite the old Tea Room." Engineer Oliver G. Taylor consulted with local residents in Yorktown about recreational use of the site and reported that, "Mr. O'Hara and Mr. Renforth . . . both agree that this is no place for a bathing beach for colored people nor is there need or the desire for it by white people." Taylor acknowledged that local African American residents had limited access to other bathing beaches. "They are allowed no place to bathe in open water in the vicinity of Norfolk, Ocean Beach or Virginia Beach," he wrote, but nevertheless supported the policy of erecting "No Bathing" signs at this location. In contrast, Taylor asserted that there was no need to erect similar signs at the other beach on government property adjacent to the town beach. Both sites were "used by white people," and given local custom, "it is not probable that colored people will make any attempt to bathe on this Government beach" (see Figure 51). This differential treatment illustrates how the NPS accommodated White recreational use of landscape features within the national

44 James M. Lindgren, *Preserving the Old Dominion: Historic Preservation and Virginia Traditionalism* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), 109–110. See also Richard T. Couture, *To Preserve and Protect: A History of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities* (Dallas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1984), 83–84, 116.

45 Stanley Abbott, COLO Superintendent, to Mr. Vint, 22 August 1955, Box 990, Entry 11, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. Superintendent Stanley Abbott had helped to establish the plans for accommodating Black travelers along the Blue Ridge Parkway before the war and finished his career at Colonial.

Figure 51. As depicted here, local White residents continued to frequent Yorktown Beach after the establishment of Colonial National Monument. The NPS sought ways to accommodate this pre-existing recreational use at the site, while African American use of a beaches elsewhere was discouraged. (From Colonial National Monument Outline of Development (1933), Box 985, Entry 11, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.)

monument, but actively discouraged and prohibited similar use of park facilities by Black visitors. Establishing a clear demarcation between the spaces used by Black and White park users and their engagement with the park landscape was designed to reinforce Jim Crow racial hierarchies. "We just must in some manner continue to maintain the color line and keep the colored people in their places," Taylor insisted. He later reported to the national office that the signs prohibiting bathing "had the desired effect … no bathers have been seen on this beach since the erection of the sign."[46]

In contrast, at Yorktown, thousands of local White residents made use of the designated beach on park property. In 1939, the NPS estimated that over eighty thousand bathers used the area, and observed that this kind of recreational use "could not be ignored."[47] To serve this demand, the regional office approved the development of a picnic area adjacent to this site (see Figure 52). Superintendent Elbert Cox also recommended the development of comfort facilities to discourage the "promiscuous use of adjacent thickets" and a bath house

46 Engineer Oliver G. Taylor to NPS Director, 15 August 1931; Taylor to Acting Associate Directory A. E. Demaray, 10 August 1931, COLO Administrative Files, Box A03, Yorktown, VA.

47 Charles E. Hatch, Jr., Junior Park Research Technician, to COLO Superintendent, 25 October 1939; Resident Landscape Architect R.A. Wilhelm, Report to Accompany General Plan York Beach Picnic and Bathing Area, 28 October 1939, Box 1945, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

Figure 52. Plan for a picnic area adjacent to Yorktown Beach approved by the regional office in 1940. Park planners also proposed the erection of temporary pit toilets, a concession stand, and first aid station. (Drawing NHP: Col-206.2-A, approved March 1940, Box 1989, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.)

to dissuade visitors from dressing or undressing in parked cars "with more or less concern, depending on available newspapers and under garments to cover windows, for privacy."[48] Park planners also contemplated the development of more extensive visitor facilities, but discussions about the development of a refreshment stand at the beach in the pre-war years were undercut by petitions from local business who cited the threat of direct competition from a government concession.[49] Even so, at this White beach, efforts to discourage further development were driven by the desire of local leaders and business owners to profit from, rather than discourage recreational use of the site.

48 Superintendent Elbert Cox to Region I Director, 27 October 1939, Box 1945, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

49 Senator Harry F. Byrd to Secretary of Interior Ickes, enclosing petition from Paul W. Crockett, 26 March 1940; NPS Director Arno B. Cammerer to COLO Superintendent, 26 April 1940, Box 1989, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

Land Acquisition and Park Inholdings

Park records suggest that Colonial National Monument staff sought to reduce the presence and visibility of African American residences and businesses in park inholdings or surrounding areas. In the 1933 Development Outline, park planners identified local properties for acquisition, identifying them on the basis of their unsuitable architectural characteristics, but also tellingly, on the basis of the race of the owner. The Eastern Division of the Branch of Plans and Design itself worked out of a building in Yorktown that had been built by an African American barber as his primary residence and storefront (see Figure 53). Park planners assured administrators that "it had been occupied by white people for some time before its acquisition by the Service." Nevertheless, this facility was characterized as substandard in its "general appearance and condition" and was identified as a temporary rather than permanent structure.[50] Other private properties in downtown Yorktown were also not viewed as desirable by White park planners, including residences and businesses like a "colored doctor's office" (see Figure 54) and "negro dry cleaning establishment." While White owners were often identified by name on the development outline, Black owners were nearly always simply designated by race as "negro."[51] The park even proposed the elimination of tourist amenities that would have facilitated travel, including Black-owned filling stations and a local boarding house considered undesirable precisely because of their proximity to significant historic sites

Figure 53. Office of Eastern Division, Branch of Plans and Design. This building was located across from the monument's headquarters on Main Street. Park planners noted that this structure was originally constructed by a local African American resident as a barber shop and residence. (From Colonial National Monument Outline of Development (1933), Box 985, Entry 11, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.)

50 COLO Outline of Development (1933), p. 77–80, Box 985, Entry 11, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

51 COLO Outline of Development (1933), Box 985, Entry 11; Proposed Property Acquisitions in the Yorktown area, 18 February 1937, Box 1962, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

Figure 54. The original caption for this photo makes note of the Office of Eastern Division, Branch of Plans and Design building to the right, and the presence of the "colored doctor's office on the left." (From Colonial National Monument Outline of Development (1933), Box 985, Entry 11, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.)

Figure 55. The building in the foreground to the right was identified as a "negro boarding house" by park planners, and the structure immediately adjacent to it as a "negro cleaning establishment" in February 1937. The brick Customhouse is in the background. (From Proposed Property Acquisitions in the Yorktown Area, 18 February 1937, Box 1962, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.)

(see Figure 55). In its justification for the acquisition of these kinds of properties, White park planners described these establishments with racially-coded language as "disorderly," "dirty," "unsightly," and "most undesirable." Planners also contended that if Black-owned properties were not aggressively acquired, conditions would worsen. In one case, they maintained, "if the land remains in private hands, it is reasonable to expect a solid line of unsightly negro houses, service stations, hot-dog stands, etc., along the York Hampton road." The value of the entire park enterprise was at stake, they suggested. "Such a development would increase the value of the land, destroy the work of the park in attempting to restore the conditions in 1781, and would be a most infamous spot on the escutcheon of the Park Service."[52]

Likewise, in the early 1930s, the Park targeted the African American community of Slabtown for removal.[53] A freedman's community established in the midst of the Civil War, Slabtown was a well-developed fixture on the landscape. As Jacob Torkelson notes in his MA Thesis on the community, "For the residents of Slabtown—many of whom trace familial ownership back to the 1870s—their properties not only represented achievement of the American dream, but also represented the tangible legacy of freedom."[54] Park planners viewed the persistence of Slabtown differently, identifying it as an undesirable inholding and referring to the long-standing community as a "negro colony," language that cast the residents' rightful claim to property into question.[55] Even in preliminary meetings in 1930, NPS officials, Virginia State Commission on Conservation and Development representatives, and local White residents of Yorktown discussed the displacement of Slabtown's Black residents and made plans for their displacement and relocation without consulting community members. Virginia state officials spoke approvingly of a proposed plan to acquire land outside the park boundaries to effect land exchanges. Their report of the conversation suggested that undercurrents of paternalism informed this approach: "it was indicated that this would give colored owners a place to move as well as relieve them of not knowing just what to do."[56]

These plans remained unrealized several decades later because the park's early land acquisition efforts were concentrated on the Yorktown waterfront and securing rights-of-way for the Parkway, but NAACP correspondence captures residents' response to the effort to ramp up land acquisition in the 1950s. Virginia civil rights attorney Spotswood Robinson reported to the NAACP Washington Bureau that Black residents in the Yorktown area were concerned about and objected to plans to execute land exchanges. They noted that although the NPS had previously agreed "to let the citizens remain in their homes, provided they were

52 Proposed Property Acquisitions in the Yorktown area, 18 February 1937, Box 1962, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

53 COLO Outline of Development (1933), Box 985, Entry 11, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

54 Jacob Torkelson, "'Where Shall We Go?': Race, Displacement, and Preservation at Slabtown and Yorktown Battlefield," (MA Thesis: University of Pennsylvania, 2019), 56.

55 Torkelson, "Where Shall We Go?" 48.

56 Memorandum for Virginia Conversation Commission Director, 19 July 1930, VA Conservation Commission Minutes and Program Meetings Books, 1926–1933, vol. 7, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

kept up to standard," their new plan was "to move all colored citizens out of the park area, and put them in a new section, with no improvements, laid or set aside by park officials." Local residents reported that the groundwork had already been laid through the relocation of their school to the proposed site outside of the park boundaries. "Two years ago our school property was secretly traded with the Park Service and the new school was to be the beginning of a new community for Negroes." Black residents objected to discriminatory treatment, and contended that White residents were either being permitted to remain in their homes or were paid for land "far above any previous prices." In comparison they observed, "For us Negroes, all they can offer us is a chance to swap lot for lot."[57] The park's plans to erase Slabtown from the landscape were only fully realized in the 1970s with the acquisition of vacant or abandoned property, the relocation of residents, and the removal of community institutions like the Masonic Lodge and Shiloh Baptist Church.[58]

Similarly, during World War II, Colonial National Historical Park was only a reluctant participant in efforts to construct a federal housing project needed to providing housing for African American civilian employees associated with the Naval Mine Depot in Yorktown. Superintendent Elbert Cox was initially enthusiastic about the proposed development for federal workers as a possible solution to the "inadequate housing conditions for National Park Service personnel in the immediate vicinity of Yorktown."[59] But when the Navy Department outlined its plans to construct twenty houses for "negro families" as well as fifty houses for "white families," Cox's support for the idea evaporated. He was particularly opposed to the Navy Department's request to place the African American development along the park's boundary and to use a 500 ft. wide strip of property within the park for this purpose. Cox acknowledged, "I can see no valid basis for objections from an administrative view to the proposed use. No historical considerations are directly affected, the land originally came to the Department of Interior by transfer from the Navy Department, and the need for it in the present contingency is for purposes related to National Defense." Nevertheless, he concluded, "I can see no advantage to the National Park Service in the project for negro housing; and, in general, I am opposed to the alienation of Park lands for such a purpose."[60] Evidently, a lack of adequate housing for Cox's White staff was a pressing concern, but the superintendent was not willing to accommodate the requirements of the Navy Department's more diverse (and segregated) work force. Ultimately, the NPS expressed willingness to cooperate if a road was

57 Spotswood Robinson to Clarence Mitchell, NAACP Washington Bureau Director, 30 April 1955; Mitchell to Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay, 9 May 1955, Box 107, IX: General Office File, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

58 See Jacob Torkelson, "Where Shall We Go?" Torkelson's MA Thesis explores the extant features of Slabtown on the landscape and their interpretive potential.

59 Superintendent Elbert Cox to NPS Director, 7 August 1940, Box 1960, Entry 10.2, RG 79, College Park, MD.

60 Superintendent Elbert Cox to NPS Director, 14 September 1940, Box 1960, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

built which would connect residents directly to commercial areas in Yorktown, steering them away from, and "prevent[ing] use of the roads through our historical area."[61]

Park officials were also ambivalent, and at times, overtly hostile to African American recreational use of areas within or near to the park. For example, although local African American residents did not have access to the national monument's beach at Yorktown, they created their own recreational opportunities on the peninsula at a site known as the National Memorial for the Progress of the Colored Race. The memorial was built on land acquired by Elder Michaux, an African American radio evangelist with broad reach who cultivated ties to the Roosevelt, Truman, and Eisenhower administrations. This beach, amusement park, museum, farm, and religious retreat afforded African American citizens with the opportunity to immerse themselves in the park landscape while honoring the arrival of and evoking their connection to the first Africans transported to Jamestown. Michaux described the site in terms of its "close proximity to the spot where . . . the first slaves landed."[62]

In the late 1930s, Park officials seeking a right-of-way for the Colonial Parkway negotiated the acquisition of a strip of land that bisected Michaux's holding, with the bulk of the eleven-hundred-acre farm sitting inland, and an eleven-acre plot standing between the Parkway and the James River. Michaux's biographer Lillian Poe noted that during his negotiations with the NPS, "Michaux used all of his assumed prestige as a radio evangelist and Roosevelt supporter and intimate to stall for a fair price and for exemption of the memorial land [on the beach front] from condemnation."[63] Michaux was able to retain control over the eleven-acre plot, maintaining his claim to private property between the river and the Parkway. He also was able to secure a promise from park officials that they would ensure that members of the church would continue to have easy access to the beach plot through the development of an underground pedestrian tunnel, and a culvert at Glebe Cut. The NPS also agreed to allow the church to maintain two access roads that would connect the property to the Parkway.[64]

This tenuous agreement began to erode in the mid-1950s, as Colonial National Historical Park prepared the park for the 350th anniversary of the establishment of Jamestown. Just as park planners anticipated increased traffic and interest in the historic landscape of Jamestown, Elder Michaux began to develop the eleven-acre beach plot for recreational use. Although the church had already used the site for bathing and annual services on Easter and the Fourth of July, Michaux and his members developed more elaborate amusement facilities

61 Region 1 Staff Meeting, Memorandum for the Files, 13 January 1941, Box 718, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

62 Lillian A. Poe, "Elder Lightfoot Solomon Michaux: His Social and Political Interests and Influence" (PhD Dissertation: College of William and Mary, 1975), 134.

63 Poe, "Elder Lightfoot Solomon Michaux," 137.

64 NPS Acting Director Hillory A. Tolson to Elder Lightfoot Solomon Michaux, 3 November 1955; NPS Director Conrad Wirth to General J. A. Anderson, Commissioner of Virginia Department of Highways, 30 March 1956; Box 5, COLO Land Records, Yorktown, VA.

along the waterfront, including a miniature railroad and carnival rides.[65] If not addressed, Regional Director Elbert Cox predicted "perpetual use along the Parkway that will be intrusive, objectionable, and non-conforming—in fact, most embarrassing to the Service."[66] Park officials described the emergent carnival atmosphere as "tasteless," and sought to persuade Michaux to abandon the development.[67] A number of NPS representatives recalled conversations during early negotiations in the 1940s about restrictions on the use of beachfront, but none of these covenants had ever been secured in writing.[68] Michaux rejected appeals from the NPS to change course, and indicated that his intent was to make an "arrangement for taking care of the colored people during the celebration." Michaux noted that in a segregated state like Virginia, "if he didn't provide a place, they would have nowhere to go." He outlined more elaborate plans for establishing concession facilities that would also provide travelers with access to sandwiches and light refreshment.[69]

Ongoing conversations with Park officials reportedly "incensed" Michaux. He informed the NPS—through his representatives—that he felt strongly that the Service "should not presume to tell him what to do with his property" and announced his intention to construct a museum building to chronicle "the progress of the colored race in America."[70] This had always been a part of his vision for the memorial, and shortly thereafter, a large windowless 30' x 100' museum that featured exhibits chronicling and celebrating African American contributions to United States history was constructed on the beach property. Chief of Lands Donald Lee described it after a visit to the site in 1957: "In many ways, it is quite similar to some of our museums. It has a series of cardboard paintings and diagrams with appropriate explanations all of which cover some happening in the history of the Nation in which the Negro played a prominent part." Emblazoned on top of the building in contrasting shingles was the affirmation "All Races Welcome Here," and flags of Ethiopia, Liberia, and Ghana were prominently displayed alongside the United States flag (see Figure 56). [71]

Elder Michaux and his successors pointed to what they described as the "historic" and "sentimental" significance of the beachfront along the James River and its association with the arrival of the first Africans in the British colonies.[72] In its earliest development

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65 Poe, "Elder Lightfoot Solomon Michaux," 64.

66 Regional Director Elbert Cox to NPS Director, 14 September 1956, Box 5, COLO Land Records, Yorktown, VA.

67 Colonial National Historical Park Superintendent to Region Director, 28 February 1957, Box 5, COLO Land Records, Yorktown, VA.

68 Notes on National Memorial, 15 June 1956, Box 5, COLO Land Records, Yorktown, VA.

69 Thomas Vint, Division of Design and Construction Chief, to NPS Director, 14 March 1957, Box 5, COLO Land Records, Yorktown, VA.

70 Chief of Lands to NPS Director, 29 May 1957, Box 5, COLO Land Records, Yorktown, VA.

71 Donald E. Lee, Chief of Lands, to NPS Director, 24 June 1957; COLO Superintendent Stanley Abbott to Regional Director, 17 July 1957, Box 5, COLO Land Records, Yorktown, VA.

72 Handwritten Notes, 10 February 1967, Box 7, COLO Land Records, Yorktown, VA.

Figure 56. 1958 Aerial view of the National Memorial for the Progress of the Colored Race, showing the recreational amusements developed along the beachfront as well as the museum building located in the upper left corner of the circular track. (COLO 10047, COLO-02285, COLO Archives, Yorktown, VA.)

plans, Colonial National Monument identified the period 1607–1619 as the primary focus of interpretation at Jamestown, noting that 1619 was significant for the "introduction of two features which were to determine very largely the course of national history—the principle of representative government and the institution of African slavery." Nevertheless, the overriding "lesson" the park strove to teach was the example of "the persistent pioneers, the cultured colonists, and the heroic revolutionists" whose persistence, culture, or heroism was seemingly untrammeled by the codification of slavery in the Virginia colony.[73] In contrast, the focus of the Michaux's memorial was trained on the contributions of free and enslaved African Americans, and a centuries-long struggle for Black freedom.

In their internal correspondence, park officials acknowledged that local Black residents had few other opportunities for recreational amusement, but sought to eliminate this use of the waterfront because they believed it detracted from the experience of visitors traversing the Parkway and impeded on the historic scene they hoped to establish on the approach to Jamestown.[74] Park officials repeatedly reached out to the Gospel Spreading Association of the Church of God, seeking promises to eliminate recreational use of the waterfront. Various proposals were advanced, including assistance relocating the carnival rides and mu-

73 COLO Outline of Development (1932), p. 43–47, Box 985, Entry 11, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

74 COLO Superintendent to Chief of Lands Donald Lee, 24 November 1961, Box 5, COLO Land Records, Yorktown, VA.

seum building to the other side of the Parkway where they might be appropriately screened, to more determined offers to purchase the eleven-acre waterfront property, or perhaps the entirety of Michaux's holdings on both sides of the Parkway. Colonial Superintendent Stanley Abbott urged the NPS to adopt a more aggressive posture and pursue condemnation proceedings.[75] Local county officials placed pressure on these tenuous negotiations when they objected to the NPS's obliteration of State Route 617, which terminated in a one-acre plot on the memorial beach they insisted was the last remaining public boat landing on the James River in the vicinity. Local White residents who sought to use the landing objected to the Black church's practice of charging for parking and the erection of a large banner across the former state route, proclaiming the site a part of the National Memorial for the Progress of the Colored Race. County officials forcibly removed the memorial's sign, and erected a sign of their own declaring the site a public boat landing despite the findings of federal officials and local courts that the county's failure to object to the condemnation of the property during the construction of the Parkway undercut their claims.[76]

These negotiations largely remained at an impasse until after the Elder Michaux's death in 1968. Deacon Rainey vigorously opposed the sale of any of the estate to the NPS, citing its historic and sentimental associations. A park official reported, "He informed me that some of the very earliest slaves (his ancestors) brought to this country disembarked at this spot." Despite Rainey's objections, the NPS requested that their proposal be put before the church's board for consideration, where it received a more hospitable reception.[77] The NPS was subsequently able to acquire this inholding, eliminating the recreational buildings and amenities developed on the site. In exchange, they assured members of the Gospel Spreading Association of the Church of God that they would be able to continue to use the site for recreational bathing and regular services for a period of twenty years. After which, they suggested that the church might simply request to use the site periodically for annual observances through a special use permit.[78]

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75 Donald E. Lee, Chief of Lands, to NPS Director, 24 June 1957; COLO Superintendent Stanley Abbott to Regional Director, 6 November 1958; Acting NPS Director E. T. Scoyen to Rudolph Jones, National Memorial to the Progress of the Colored Race in America, 6 November 1958, Box 5, COLO Land Records, Yorktown, VA.

76 "Negro Group Says Road Closing Not Their Doing," *Newport News Daily Press,* 22 August 1958; "Sheriff Told to Clear Roadway to James River Landing where JCC, Negro Group Dispute Title," *Newport News Daily Press*, 11 July 1961; "County Claims Road Access," *Newport News Daily Press*, 13 July 1961; "Park Service Closes Road to Negro Recreation Area," *Newport News Daily Press,* 2 September 1961. In an effort to eliminate state routes that crossed the Parkway and to reduce through traffic, the Park Service sought and secured the condemnation of state route 617. When Michaux later acquired the farm on the other side of 617 and expanded his holdings, the Justice Department determined that he also acquired the condemned and unmaintained former state highway. Statement of NPS Position, NPS Director Conrad Wirth to General J. A. Anderson, Commissioner of Virginia Department of Highways, 30 March 1956; COLO Superintendent to Regional Director, 12 July 1961, Box 5, COLO Land Records, Yorktown, VA.

77 Handwritten notes, 26 November 1968; Acting Regional Director Charles S. Marshall to Rudolph Jones, 17 December 1968, Box 7, COLO Land Records, Yorktown, VA.

78 COLO Superintendent Alec Gould, draft letter 1973, Box 7, COLO Land Records, Yorktown, VA.

Throughout this period, superintendents and others with long-standing associations with the park repeatedly suggested that the NPS should move more aggressively to secure and acquire the beach tract. Indeed, they intimated that by refusing to do so the Department of Interior was behaving in a "discriminatory" fashion, by providing favorable terms to Michaux that they did not extend to other property owners.[79] Michaux's radio evangelism and extended reach did provide him with more influence and access to political officials than other Black inholders. He was credited in some quarters "with leading the first swing of Negro voters to the Democratic party," when he broke with Hoover and the Republicans over the president's treatment of the Bonus Army demonstrators during the Great Depression.[80] In his conflicts with NPS officials over Parkway rights-of-way before the war, he reportedly threatened to bring his claims and grievances directly to the attention of Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes and President Roosevelt.[81] In 1957, as they sought more direct control over the memorial beach, park officials angled to counter Michaux's political influence and public association with figures like President Eisenhower. On a drive along the Parkway laid between Williamsburg and Jamestown, park officials appealed to John D. Rockefeller Jr. to intercede on their behalf, and to organize a meeting between the Director of the NPS and the President at Colonial Williamsburg later that year. They hoped that by doing so they might be able to persuade the president "to bring good sense into this Coney Island approach of the Negroes."[82] In comparison, the experiences of other Black inholders reveal that they found it decidedly more difficult to mount a defense of their claims to property when confronted by representatives of the federal government.

Evaluation of Extant Resources

There are extant resources within Colonial National Historical Park that can be used to interpret the history of segregation within the park's boundaries. Notably, three of the original "White only" restrooms associated with the sesquicentennial celebration remain standing. The restrooms for "White Men" and "White Women" at Moore House are not only extant, but retain their internal plumbing features and partitions when compared to blueprints and planning documents from the 1930s. The White comfort station on Church Street also remains standing, although the "Negro" comfort station that stood alongside it has been razed.

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79 Regional Director Elbert Cox to NPS Director, 6 January 1961, Box 5, COLO Land Records, Yorktown, VA.

80 Poe, "Elder Lightfoot Solomon Michaux," 145

81 Poe, "Elder Lightfoot Solomon Michaux," 154.

82 COLO Superintendent Stanley Abbott to NPS Director, 7 May 1957, Box 5, COLO Land Records, Yorktown, VA.

These buildings are formally associated with the history of segregation and speak eloquently to the federal government's accommodation of local law and custom during the pre-war years. But these are not the only extant resources within the park associated with Jim Crow segregation. Most of the park landscape visitors continue to encounter today has been shaped by the innumerable contributions African American CCC workers made to the development of the park during the 1930s. The Parkway between Williamsburg and Yorktown was graded, paved, and landscaped through the use of African American labor drawn from segregated CCC camps. Yet the nomination form listing the Parkway on the national register focuses solely on its unique design features. Even a section praising the generally "high" workmanship of the Parkway's original construction fails to recognize these contributions directly: "The Parkway's original construction used high quality materials and a large work force to produce a roadway defined by its precisely calculated and constructed alignments, meticulously designed and built structures, and carefully planted roadside plantings." The young African American men and veterans who completed this work should be more directly recognized. The contributions of CCC workers in this New Deal work relief and conservation program only enhance the historical significance of the Parkway.[83] Similarly, the participation of CCC workers in the excavation and recovery of archeological evidence and the development of the national park's collections, as well as the reconstruction of interpretive features like the French Battery, also present an opportunity to recognize African American contributions to the development of Colonial National Historical Park.

Although many of the features associated with former inholdings within the park have been eradicated, there are still visible traces on the landscape that mark this history. For example, at Slabtown, the grid lines of community streets are still visible. Jacob Torkelson's recent University of Pennsylvania MA thesis "'Where Shall We Go?': Race, Displacement, and Preservation at Slabtown and Yorktown Battlefield" (2019), outlines a series of recommendations for researching and interpreting this site. Little material evidence of the National Memorial for the Progress of Colored Race remains along the James River waterfront. Nevertheless, due to the site's associations with Elder Michaux (an influential African American radio evangelist), the Church of God's long-standing relationship to the site, and its history as an area privately developed for African American recreational use along the Parkway, the site might be more robustly interpreted.

83 Colonial Parkway National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 15 October 1955, updated 1 December 1999.

CASE STUDY

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park

The development of visitor facilities at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park (FRSP) in the 1930s and 1940s illuminates the practice of Jim Crow segregation at national battlefield parks. The policies enacted at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park during this era are particularly instructive because administrative oversight of all Virginia Battlefield Parks was coordinated under Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park Superintendent Branch Spalding. Policies inaugurated at this park may have informed development elsewhere.

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park was developed and prepared for visitation with the contributions of segregated CCC labor. While some parks in the state of Virginia (like Colonial National Monument) were developed entirely with African American CCC camps, and others (like Shenandoah National Park) were developed with White CCC camps, both White camps and Black camps operated within Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. Consequently, this site affords the opportunity to compare the interaction between the camps and NPS administrative and technical staff and the disparate treatment of White and Black enrollees at the same location.

As elsewhere, the NPS developed segregated visitor facilities at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, like restrooms and picnic areas. However, concessions were not operative in Virginia's Civil War battlefields, since Coordinating Superintendent Branch Spalding felt that local restaurants and hotels adequately served the needs of the public and believed that on-site concessions would undercut the "dignity" of the battlefields.[1] Spalding pointed to the "administrative difficulties" associated with concessions and advocated for the elimination of concessions in all NPS historic areas. He contended that concessions generally charged "unduly high prices" while offering "low quality" service to the public.[2] Consequently, the range of segregated visitor facilities developed and examined below is relatively attenuated in comparison to parks with concessions. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the decision *not* to develop concessions had a disproportionate impact on Black

1 Branch Spalding, VA Battlefields Coordinating Superintendent, to NPS Director, 29 July 1938, Box 1989, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

2 Spalding to NPS Director, 1 August 1938, Box 1989, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA.

and White visitors—access to local hotels and restaurants was not equal during the Jim Crow era. Additionally, after the NPS inaugurated a nondiscrimination policy in 1945, visitors could not exercise the choice to secure integrated service within the park rather than patronizing segregated facilities outside of its boundaries.

Community Relations and Establishment of CCC Camps

At Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, an African American CCC camp was located at Chancellorsville Battlefield, while White camps labored to reshape the battlefield landscape at Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House. For a brief period in 1938 and 1939, a second African American company was also stationed at Wilderness. Notably, both local residents and NPS administrative and technical staff responded to the arrival of African American enrollees differently than their White counterparts. Local residents particularly resented the replacement of White companies with Black companies, and NPS officials repeatedly petitioned for the removal of Black companies from Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park and actively sought their transfer elsewhere.

As CCC camps were established around the nation, the reactions of local populations were decidedly mixed. Some welcomed the economic investment that enrollees would bring to their communities; the Virginia Department of Public Welfare determined that CCC camps contributed $315,000 every month to the state's economy.[3] But local residents also expressed anxiety about the influx of unemployed young men to their locality.[4] This kind of resistance was amplified in the case of African American CCC camps. The Associated Negro Press acerbically noted that White southerners "rather enjoy seeing Negroes" labor on public works projects like roads, provided such services were provided by "convicts and under surveillance of armed guards." However, when CCC men performed similar kinds of labor in the absence of "ball and chains, shackles and the armed watcher" protests erupted.[5] There were reports of White complaints in all three communities in Virginia that had African American camps in nearby national parks—Fredericksburg, Williamsburg, and Appomattox.

In Fredericksburg, local residents protested when the CCC decided to replace a White camp at Chancellorsville with African American Company 362.[6] Residents expressed

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3 Byrne, "Civilian Conservation Corps," 23.

4 Paige, "The Civilian Conservation Corps," 89; Conrad Wirth, *Park, Politics, and the People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 106.

5 "Locating of Timber Troop Camps Near Whites Hits," *New Journal and Guide,* 6 July 1935; Paige, "The Civilian Conservation Corps," 94.

6 The earlier white company at Chancellorsville was also organized as Company 362. With their replacement by African American enrollees, Company 362 was re-identified as a "colored" company. Consequently, after this transition in 1934, some reports carry the designation Company 362c with the "c" indicating its status as an African American company.

particular concern about the disruptions that African American enrollees from northern cities might cause in relation to the established racial order.[7] A formal petition was filed by local and county officials objecting to the change, but was overridden by CCC Director Fechner. "Protests from City Officials Unheeded," trumpeted the *Free Lance-Star,* "Negro Unit to Arrive Wednesday at Camp in County: Detachment of 190 Men to Displace Present Force at Chancellorsville." Federal officials overseeing the placement of CCC camps tried to reassure local residents by pointing to the accomplishments and conduct of Black CCC camps in other communities. "Negroes have shown themselves to be well behaved and amenable to control," Colonel Persins wrote in a letter to Congressman Bland. "Chancellorsville will have no cause to fear." Ultimately, only the threat to remove the camp entirely quashed this local resistance movement. Local representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and city officials did not want to lose either the immediate economic investment the camp represented or its long-term contribution to the park's development and tourism in region. Residents were also appeased when they learned that most of the enrollees in the camp were from Virginia and understood local practice. T. C. Walker, Advisor and Consultant of Negro Affairs for the Virginia Emergency Relief Administration, accompanied Company 362 to Fredericksburg, and assured local reporters, "They are mostly Virginians and are used to our ways and customs." He offered to return to the camp to speak with the men personally if any problems arose.[8]

Even after formal petitions to block the arrival of African American CCC enrollees in Fredericksburg came to naught, local residents continued to complain about the conduct of the young men when they came to town on their evenings off. Within a week, a group of enrollees from Company 362 were taken into custody for "roaming around the streets and making too much noise." They were informed that CCC men were expected to return to their camps by midnight—this curfew would ensure that they would not continue "to disturb the slumbers of the local citizenry."[9] Conflict between African American enrollees and Black residents at a dance sponsored at the Old Fellows Hall reportedly created a heightened atmosphere that could only be controlled by local police with "riot guns to maintain order." Despite the hospitalization of a CCC worker due to critical internal injuries after being assaulted on Princess Anne Street, the *Free Lance-Star* reported that "authorities declared that

7 It should be noted that similar concerns were not registered about the presence of white enrollees from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York, stationed at Camp Wilderness. Instead, when white northern enrollees were moved out of the area and replaced with White Virginia men in the summer of 1935, the *Free Lance-Star* noted that they had "made many friends in this section since they were stationed here and their contemplated departure is regretted." See "Camp Personnel Will Be Changed," *Free Lance-Star*, 18 July 1935; "Orange Men Go to Wilderness Camp," *Free Lance-Star,* 19 September 1935.

8 Joan Zenzen, "At the Crossroads," 67–68. "Negro CCC Unit to Arrive Wednesday at Camp in County: Detachment of 190 Men to Displace Present Force at Chancellorsville," *Free Lance-Star,* 6 August 1934; "Colored CCC Men at Camp in County: Group Detrains here at 2:26. Nearly All Are Virginians, Arrival is Quiet," *Free Lance-Star,* 8 August 1934.

9 "CCC Boys Warned to Be Less Noisy," 16 August 1934, *Free Lance-Star*, 16 August 1934.

local colored people should not be penalized for disorders created by the forestry workers."[10] In contrast, one member of Company 362 was sentenced to 12 months in jail for "assault and battery" of a local White woman when he approached and hugged her while under the influence of alcohol on Caroline Street.[11] Black enrollees who did not comply with local expectations for racial deference in and around Fredericksburg were swiftly punished or censured.

Enrollees were aware of the hostility that surrounded them and described the isolation they experienced as a result. In the first issue of the camp's newspaper *The Blow Out*, LaFond Watkins described his arrival at Camp Chancellorsville in August 1935. He recalled, "I had been transplanted to a place where there was not a man who could be called friend … It seemed that every hand was turned against us and that every voice held a rough challenge to us who had dared enter the sacred portals of this camp. We were strangers in a strange land and nowhere it seemed was there one to say welcome stranger." In this context, young enrollees relied on each other and the men who had been designated as leaders within camp for support.[12]

Senior Leader William W. Murden of Company 333, the second African American company stationed at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park at Wilderness, noted that the "camp boys" were widely misunderstood. They were judged by the "thoughtless portion of the public" on the appearance of their uniform or the trucks that transported them to and from camp, but also their demeanor. "When the boys are out on Liberty Parties their lively ways of entertaining is misinterpreted by some," he wrote. Murden reminded his readers that enrollees were far from home and sought respite from their homesickness. He suggested that their "carefree" behavior as they sought to improve themselves while supporting their families should be commended rather than criticized. Murden contended that enrollees possessed the right "to get free air, the right to roam, the freedom of exercise, the lure of hard work, and rough play." It was his hope that "the public will blot out their mistakes concerning the camp boys and will form a better and warmer conception of those youths pioneering in a new field."[13]

CCC camp officials and local political leaders in Fredericksburg sought to contain and redirect the exercise of some of the rights Murden listed in his editorial. The Fredericksburg Kiwanis Club promoted the creation of a dedicated social center for CCC enrollees in downtown Fredericksburg by repurposing the Colored Elementary School building on Princess Anne Street. In support of this proposal, James G. Harrison suggested that the development

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10 "Seeking Ten Who Injured CCC Man: Police Say Local Negroes Attacked Forestry Worker After Dance," *Free Lance-Star*, 13 September 1934.

11 "Negro Draws year in Assault on Girl: Drunken CCC Enrollee Sentenced for Offense on Street," *Free Lance-Star,* 23 September 1937.

12 Lafond Watkins, "Eulogizing 'Pop' Brooks," *The Blow Out,* 15 November 1935, p. 3, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

13 Senior Leader William W. Murden, "Misunderstanding a Camp Boy," *Out of the Wilderness*, 1 no. 1 (December 1937).

of a recreational center would demonstrate the city's ongoing support of the CCC companies and the influx of economic spending that they brought to the community, while reducing conflict with enrollees "walking the streets and hanging out on corners on cold nights while awaiting the arrival of trucks to take them back to their camps." CCC Educational Advisor George M. Burroughs also supported this effort when it was presented to the city council.[14] The ability of CCC enrollees to explore Fredericksburg at liberty was also controlled through administrative processes. In his guide for new enrollees in African American Company 333, Educational Adviser C. Rushton Long reminded enrollees of their obligation "to get a pass before leaving the campgrounds."[15]

Efforts to Relocate African American Camps

For their part, NPS administrators and technical staff worked directly with African American enrollees on a variety of projects throughout Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. Internal NPS correspondence reveals that local and regional officials thought that African American enrollees were best suited for "simple" work, and submitted requests to the Third Corps Liaison Officer to execute camp exchanges which would result in the placement of White companies in the park. These efforts culminated in the removal of both African American CCC companies from Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, and the installation of the White company at Wilderness in the quarters formally occupied by Company 362 at Chancellorsville.

Local and regional NPS officials asserted their preference for White CCC companies shortly after the White veterans' Camp MP-1 at Spotsylvania Court House closed in 1936 and African American Company 333 moved into Camp MP-4 in Wilderness in 1937.[16] Camp MP-4 had previously been occupied by a White junior company. With the ongoing occupation of Camp MP-3 by Company 362, NPS administrators were operating in Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park with two Black CCC companies for the first time. Within weeks of Company 333's arrival, the NPS regional office petitioned for their removal. Regional Director Herbert Evison sought to execute an exchange of Company 333 for a White company working under the supervision of the Soil Conservation Service. "In its efforts to obtain a white camp for MP-4, the National Park Service does not desire to place a handicap on any other agency," Evison wrote. "It is honestly believed, however, that for the type of work being

14 "CCC Social Rooms Urged by Kiwanis: Wants City to Establish Recreation Center for Camps," *Free Lance-Star,* 9 August 1935; "Will Ask Council for CCC Quarters: Want Social Recreation Room Established in City," *Free Lance-Star,* 26 October 1935, Box 2475, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA.

15 C. Rushton Long, Company 333 Educational Advisor, "A General Guide for New Enrollees," Box 223, Entry 115, RG 35, NARA.

16 C. Rushton Long, Company 333 Educational Advisor, "A General Guide for New Enrollees," Box 223, Entry 115, RG 35, NARA.

carried on under Soil Conservation Service supervision, a negro company is at least fully as useful as a white one, and I am inclined to believe actually better. Certainly their type of work, tremendously valuable as it is, is of a much simpler nature than that carried on by camps assigned to the National Park Service." Evison suggested that Company 333 might be exchanged for a White Soil Conservation Service company then-located in a non-mountainous area in the state.[17] The CCC generally sought to place African American companies in communities with a higher proportion of Black residents, believing that this would reduce local resistance. Evison couched his appeal with this understanding in mind.

When this request was not granted, appeals from the regional office were advanced with new urgency during the summer of 1938. Acting Regional Director Herbert Evison emphasized the importance of using CCC enrollees at contact stations and for providing guide service throughout the park. Evison maintained that "unfavorable public reaction to performance of such service by negroes" had forced the interpretive program to a "standstill." This urgent need, he maintained, "might be met by white enrollees."[18] It is worth noting that Evison's argument anticipated an unfavorable reaction from White visitors; his understanding of the park's "public" constituency evidently did not include African American travelers.

Notably, while Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park had used White CCC enrollees to provide guide service previously, the number of enrollees selected for such service never numbered more than ten. NPS officials suggested that they selected guides from the ranks based on their assessment of the men's intelligence, education, elocution, and appearance.[19] Undoubtedly, there were African American enrollees assigned to the park that could have stepped into these roles, but White enrollees from Spotsylvania and Wilderness had been used to provide guide service at Chancellorsville as early as 1935. Internal correspondence suggests that these men lived in the Chancellorsville camp with African American Company 362, but NPS Assistant Historian T. Sutton Jett reported, "These men mess and are quartered with the foresters" rather than with African American enrollees.[20] When the White veterans' camp at Spotsylvania Court House was transferred to Berea, VA, in 1936, six men who had worked as guides at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park were detached from Company 1365 so they could continue their work in the park.[21]

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17 Acting Regional NPS Director Herbert Evison to Third Corps Liaison Officer Stanton G. Smith, 28 October 1937, RG 79, Entry 65: Memoranda and Correspondence Concerning CCC Camps, FRSP Bound Volumes, Chatham Manor, Fredericksburg, VA.

18 Acting Regional NPS Director Herbert Evison to Third Corps Liaison Officer Stanton G. Smith, August 1938, RG 79, Entry 65: Memoranda and Correspondence Concerning CCC Camps, FRSP Bound Volumes, Chatham Manor, Fredericksburg, VA.

19 T. Sutton Jett, Assistant Historian, Weekly Report, 9 August 1934, Box 2466; Narrative Report of MP1, July 1934, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA.

20 T. Sutton Jett, Historical Assistant, Weekly Report, 9 May 1935; Report of Junior Historian T. Sutton Jett, 19 September 1935, Box 2466, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA.

21 Superintendent's Report, April 1936, Box 2470, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA. "Veteran Enrollees Keep Jobs in Park," *Free Lance-Star*, 1 May 1936.

The White guides worked as "junior facilitating personnel" until that position was abolished; four of them re-enrolled in the CCC in association with the White veteran's camp at Petersburg Battlefield and returned to Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park on detached duty in July 1938.[22] In the summer of 1939, these four guides—George T. Carter, Edwin E. Hagemann, James McRainey, and Joseph Purvis—were still listed as technical personnel connected to Company 362.[23] This irregular arrangement attracted the attention of CCC Special Investigator Ross Abare who noted that they were engaged in "normal Park Service Administration and supervise no CCC labor or project work." Abare observed that the position of these men on staff also meant that there were only three foremen left to supervise work projects, undermining the efficiency and the safety of the enrollees' work in the field.[24] As the Department of Interior's CCC Advisory Council Representative Conrad Wirth rejected these assertions and suggested that Abare's analysis was "decidedly out of line."[25]

Nevertheless, the precariousness of the park's elaborate arrangements to retain White CCC enrollees for guide service—rather than training African American men for the same purpose—sat at the center of Evison's arguments for executing an exchange of camps. In August 1938 he renewed his efforts, this time seeking the transfer of Company 362 at Camp MP-3 in Chancellorsville for a White company located at Fort Hunt, VA. Evison may have believed that this request would be honored because it involved an exchange between two NPS companies, and he had secured the agreement of the National Capital Park Superintendent. However, the Third Corps rejected Evison's request on the grounds that local protests against the relocation of an African American CCC company to Fort Hunt made such an exchange impossible. Evison requested reconsideration, arguing that the NPS was already carrying an "overload" of African American CCC companies in the region. He also suggested that the Third Corps office was "scarcely consistent" in its determination to bow to local sentiment when they had disregarded protests in Fredericksburg before the placement of Company 362 at Chancellorsville several years earlier. In his effort to secure his objective, Evison praised the work of African American CCC companies, jettisoning his earlier suggestion that they were not suited for work in the parks. At Chancellorsville, he suggested, the local community was "not only resigned … but satisfied" with the presence of Company 362, and noted that the company had a demonstrated record which illustrated that its work was "fully as good as that of either white junior or white veteran companies."[26] By October of 1938, the Third Corps granted at least one of Evison's requests and Wilderness Company 333 was moved out of the

22 Report of Junior Research Technician Ralph Happell for July 1938, Box 2466, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA.

23 Ross Abare, Camp Inspection Report, Company 362, 7 June 1939, Box 221, Entry 115, RG 35, NARA.

24 Ross Abare, Relative to Camp MP-3, 23 June 1939, Box 221, Entry 115, RG 35, NARA.

25 Conrad Wirth, CCC Advisory Council Department of Interior Representative, to CCC Director Robert Fechner, 1 September 1939, Box 221, Entry 115, RG 35, NARA.

26 Acting Regional NPS Director Herbert Evison to Third Corps Liaison Officer Stanton G. Smith, August 1938, RG 79, Entry 65: Memoranda and Correspondence Concerning CCC Camps, FRSP Bound Volumes, Chatham Manor, Fredericksburg, VA.

park within a year of its arrival and transferred to Maryland to help develop the C&O National Historical Park.[27] They were replaced by a White junior company.

This issue arose again when Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park was targeted for a reduction in the number of camps in the park in 1940. Of the two remaining camps, Wilderness and Chancellorsville, Chancellorsville was more centrally located but it was occupied by African American enrollees. Park Superintendent Branch Spalding appealed to the regional director to move the White enrollees to Chancellorsville by displacing the Black men enlisted in Company 362. "The camp which it would be least disadvantageous for the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park to lose is Camp NP-24 [formerly Camp NM-4] Wilderness," Spalding acknowledged. "It is highly important, however, that there be a white company in this park. Consequently, in the event that Camp NP-24 is taken away from the park, it will be greatly appreciated if you will effect the placement of a white company at … Chancellorsville."[28] During the winter of 1940–41 this change occurred, and the White men at Wilderness replaced their African American counterparts in Company 362 at Chancellorsville.[29]

The White NPS staff associated with Company 362 were relocated to Appomattox Court House to guide and direct the work of CCC Company 1351, a "colored veterans'" camp that had been formerly located at Yorktown, while the enrollees were transferred to Galax to assist with development near the Blue Ridge Mountain Parkway.[30] Although Galax was located in a mountainous region with a relatively low African American population, this site was selected because it had not been previously occupied and consequently would not require the displacement of a White camp elsewhere, but also because it was another NPS camp. "Such action," the Third Corps noted, "is logical because the colored company comes from one of your camps that is being discontinued upon the recommendation of your agency, and for

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27 "Civilian Conservation Corps Activities in the National Capital Region of the NPS," HABS DC-959, Written Historical and Descriptive Data, National Capital Parks-Central, Washington, DC.

28 Spalding to NPS Regional Director, 2 February 1940, RG 79, Entry 65: Memoranda and Correspondence Concerning CCC Camps, FRSP Bound Volumes, Chatham Manor, Fredericksburg, VA.

29 Zenzen, "At the Crossroads," 83–84. "Negro CCC Camp to be Moved: Chancellorsville Enrollees Will Be Transferred to Galax," *Free Lance-Star*, 30 November 1940; "The CCC Camps," *Free Lance-Star*, 14 December 1940. Special Investigator Ross Abare to Charles Kenlan, Assistant to the CCC Director, 29 March 1941, Box 221, Entry 115, RG 35, NARA. Acting Regional Director Fred Johnston to NPS Director, 11 December 1940, RG 79, Entry 65: Memoranda and Correspondence Concerning CCC Camps, FRSP Bound Volumes, Chatham Manor, Fredericksburg, VA.

30 Zenzen, "At the Crossroads," 83–84. "Negro CCC Camp to be Moved: Chancellorsville Enrollees Will Be Transferred to Galax," *Free Lance-Star*, 30 November 1940; "The CCC Camps," *Free Lance-Star*, 14 December 1940. Special Investigator Ross Abare to Charles Kenlan, Assistant to the CCC Director, 29 March 1941, Box 221, Entry 115, RG 35, NARA. Superintendent's Narrative Report, July 1940, Box 2470, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA.

which your agency is alone responsible."[31] Regional NPS officials acceded to this outcome, agreeing that it was a preferable solution to the displacement of a White company.[32]

Opportunities for Training and Advancement in CCC Camps

Work in the CCC afforded the young men working in Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park with the opportunity to earn money and support their families. Some also hoped that it would provide educational and vocational training which would improve their employment opportunities after their term of service. CCC camps offered educational instruction in the evening in a variety of subjects and educational advisers supported the goals of individual enrollees by offering a range of classes. While speaking with White enrollees at Wilderness, the *Free Lance-Star* reported that Superintendent Branch Spalding urged them to improve themselves on the job and in the evenings, telling the enrollees "that their places in life fifteen years from now is largely dependent on their present efforts and their willingness to take advantage of the opportunities offered to broaden and educate themselves and to realize their present and coming responsibilities."[33] But the opportunities extended to Black and White enrollees in the park differed. Although African American enrollees distinguished themselves as camp leaders, they were not recognized or selected for positions as visitor guides or "junior facilitating personnel." These limitations meant that they were not retained or moved into positions that might have led to more permanent employment in the parks.

When African American Company 362 first arrived at Chancellorsville, George M. Burroughs served as educational adviser for all three CCC camps. CCC records suggest that the space dedicated to educational activities in Camp Chancellorsville was smaller than that developed at Camp Wilderness.[34] Moreover, Burroughs' respect for the intellectual capabilities of the men under his charge at Chancellorsville is called into question by his actions in the other camps. Even as he took responsibility for coordinating the educational program at Chancellorsville, he worked with White enrollees stationed at Wilderness to

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31 Third Corps Liaison Officer Stanton Smith to NPS Regional Director Tillotson, 20 June 1940, RG 79, Entry 65: Memoranda and Correspondence Concerning CCC Camps, FRSP Bound Volumes, Chatham Manor, Fredericksburg, VA.

32 Acting Regional Director Fred T. Johnson to Stanton Smith, 23 July 1940, RG 79, Entry 65: Memoranda and Correspondence Concerning CCC Camps, FRSP Bound Volumes, Chatham Manor, Fredericksburg, VA.

33 "CCC Notes," *Free Lance-Star*, 23 March 1935.

34 This became evident when the white company at Wilderness displaced Company 362 at Chancellorsville. Special Investigator Ross Abare noted, "The space devoted to educational activities at Camp NP11 was much less than what was in use at Camp NP24 and unless additional space is provided the company will be very cramped in their new surroundings as they have equipment which the smaller amount of space at Camp NP11 will not accommodate." See Special Investigator Ross Abare to Charles Kenlan, Assistant to the Director, 29 March 1941, Box 221, Entry 115, RG 35, NARA.

develop a blackface minstrel performance which was presented at the Spotsylvania Camp and the surrounding community to great acclaim. Called the "Rambling Blacks," the troupe was composed of a cast of enrollees from Company 282 with Burroughs himself taking the part of the interlocutor. Recounting the performance at the Spotsylvania Camp, the *Free Lance-Star* reported, "From the opening song to the grand finale, 150 veterans roared with laughter at the gags of the end men, the humorous songs and dance skits of the end and specialty men and chorus. For 60 minutes all cares and worries were forgotten, and old man merriment reigned supreme." The troupe took their performance to Chancellor High School as well at the invitation of the Parent Teachers Association. The local paper noted that their previous performances had been well-received in the community.[35]

By the mid-1930s, African American educators in Virginia were actively campaigning for the placement of well-qualified Black men in the camps as educational advisers. At Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, C. Porterfield Harris stepped in to reorganize the educational program for Company 362 at Chancellorsville as early as 1936.[36] Harris was a star pupil at Hampton Institute, having won the college's annual essay contest for his paper on "The New Negro and the New Deal." After graduation, his position in the CCC afforded him with the opportunity to advance the ideals of the New Negro within the context of the Roosevelt administration's work relief program.[37] By July 1938, 162 of 186 educational advisers assigned to African American CCC camps were Black. The educational programs they oversaw served approximately twenty-five thousand enrollees. They were highly qualified for their positions—all were college graduates, twenty-seven percent held master's degrees, and two percent had earned their PhD. More than half had previous teaching experience.[38] Educational advisers worked closely with WPA teachers in some camps. Harris relied on Dr. Warren Lee Jr., a WPA teacher who was both a Fredericksburg native and a graduate of Howard University.[39]

The CCC also responded to calls to assign Black chaplains to African American CCC camps. Ultimately, no more than ten Black chaplains were appointed to African American CCC camps at any given time, but a significant proportion of these men served in Virginia.

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35 "CCC Notes," *Free Lance-Star*, 15 December 1934; "CCC Men to Put on Minstrel Show," 14 January 1935, *Free Lance-Star.*

36 "Second Annual CCC Training Conference at Hampton Institute," *New Journal and Guide,* 15 August 1936. In November 1936, a CCC inspection report for Company 362 noted: "New Colored Educational Advisor Doing Splendid Job." Special Investigator Charles Kenlan, Supplementary Report, 18 November 1936, Box 221, Entry 115, RG 35, NARA, College park, MD.

37 "Hampton Debate and Essay Awards Made: C. Porterfield Harris Scores in Both," *New Journal and Guide,* 28 April 1934.

38 William Aery, Director of Education Hampton Institute, "The Education of the Negro," *New Journal and Guide,* 16 July 1938; "CCC Educational Advisors Preparing Youths for Work: Many Hold Master's Degrees, According to H.W. Oxley," *New Journal and Guide,* 19 December 1936.

39 "Dramatics," *The Blowout,* 15 November 1935, CCC Co. 362; "A Tribute," *The Battlefield News* vol 3.4, CCC Co. 62, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

William B. Marsh, the chaplain assigned to Company 362 at Chancellorsville launched a campaign to convert and baptize enrollees through his "Soul Saving Campaign." *The Battlefield News* observed that Marsh urged enrollees to embrace faith as a means of lessening or lightening their burdens.[40] The paper reported that more than one hundred enrollees from the camps Marsh served participated in mass baptism in 1938. The chaplain urged the men in Company 362 to establish relationships with Black churches in Fredericksburg or at home after their terms of service in the CCC.[41]

Although Black officers like chaplains advanced into a select number of positions, opportunities for African Americans to advance into administrative positions appointed by the Department of Interior and Agriculture were limited. In White CCC camps, some of these positions were filled from the ranks of the enrollees.[42] The same was not true in African American CCC camps, even when enrollees demonstrated particular skills or leadership capacity. These racial disparities had long-term impacts on the diversity of NPS personnel. As the CCC program came to a close, some men who had been on the payroll of the ECW became permanent employees of the NPS.[43] For the most part, the men who had been afforded the opportunity to take that first step toward a career in the parks were White enrollees.

African American enrollees who saw the CCC as an opportunity for advancement largely distinguished themselves from their peers by becoming recognized leaders and assistant leaders of work crews or barracks, or members of the "overhead" who helped to run the camps and were not engaged directly in conservation work. These positions were sought after as pathways to secure employment outside of the CCC. More immediately, assistant leaders and leaders received increases in pay, earning thirty-six and forty-five dollars a month respectively.[44] Reporter William Conklin Brown observed that these men effectively served as a second tier of "colored staff" in the camps, working as assistant educational advisers, mess stewards, company clerks, and managers of post exchanges operated for the convenience of the enrollees.[45]

At Camp Chancellorsville, Norman Webb was described by the company newspaper, *The Blow Out*, as man well-qualified to hold a position in the overhead, but he had been assigned to work in the field transplanting trees. "The zeal of ambition which was a burning

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40 "Ten Negro Army Men Get CCC Jobs," *New Journal and Guide*, 28 September 1935; "Soul Saving Campaign," *The Battlefield New*, 3, no. 1, CCC Co. 362, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

41 "A New Life," *The Battlefield News,* 3 no. 2, CCC Co. 362, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

42 In his memoir, Conrad Wirth notes that enrollees that distinguished themselves "were taken on as foremen or LEMs by the supervising technical agencies." Although supervisory personnel were also enrolled for six-month terms, there was no restriction on re-enlistment. Wirth, *Park, Politics, and the People*, 105.

43 Paige, "The Civilian Conservation Corps," 23.

44 "Colored Youths Will Suffer Most if CCC is Abolished," *New Journal and Guide,* 10 January 1942.

45 William Conklin Brown, "Danville, Lawrenceville, Emporia, and CCC Camps Visited by Traveling Guide Reporter," *New Journal and Guide,* 3 August 1935. See also Edgar G. Brown, "The CCC and Colored Youth of the Nation," *New Journal and Guide,* 27 April 1935.

flame inside of him kept his thoughts on advancing upward to the rank of leader," the paper reported, but his desires were not immediately realized. Instead, Webb found himself the assistant to an assistant leader. Still, he sought opportunities for advancement on the weekends by observing the work in the camp supply room. Finally, his initiative was recognized when he was asked to fill a vacancy as the supply clerk. The paper celebrated Webb's tenacity and cautioned other enrollees: "If you think you are beaten, you are; if you think you dare not, you don't; if you think you can win but won't try, it's always certain you won't."[46] In the CCC's 1937 Annual, the entry for Company 362 noted that twenty-four of the 190 enrollees still remained in camp, "twelve of whom are rated men." These leaders and assistant leaders provided stability for the company during "many changes in officer personnel."[47]

With the end of the CCC, African American workers found no place for themselves in the NPS. In 1942, the newly established Fair Employment Practice Committee surveyed the Department of Interior's workforce and found that only 1.6 percent of its employees were African American. In Virginia's national parks, there were no African American employees at most parks, including Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park and Appomattox Court House National Monument, which had hosted Black CCC camps. [48]

Visitor Facilities: Picnic Grounds

NPS administrators and CCC camp superintendents often prioritized the development of facilities for White visitors, and as a result, those planned for African American use were frequently underdeveloped or completely unrealized. NPS Director Cammerer did not believe that the need for facilities for Black visitors was "just as great" as those for White visitors, or that facilities for African American use should be constructed as a matter of course. "I don't think that we are required to anticipate all kinds of service in the parks by installing facilities unless there is a demand," he wrote. "In the Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains National Parks I have always said that we have a location for colored camps in each park, but that these will not be built unless there is a proven demand therefor."[49] Department

46 Elmer R. Shelton, "Norman Webb," *The Blow Out,* 15 November 1935, CCC Co. 362, CCC Newspapers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

47 *Official Annual, 1937, Civilian Conservation Corps: District No. 3, Third Corps Area* (Baton Rouge, LA: Direct Advertising Co., 1937).

48 Lawrence W. Cramer, Executive Secretary President's Committee on Fair Employment Practice, to Secretary Harold Ickes, 22 August 1942; Acting Superintendent J.C. Harrington, Colonial National Park, to NPS Director, 1 December 1942; Coordinating Superintendent Edward Hummel, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, to NPS Director, 1 December 1942; Superintendent Hubert A. Gurney, Number of Permanent Negro Employees as of November 30, 1942, 1 December 1942, Box 254, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

49 Cammerer to Demaray and Wirth, 30 September 1936, Box 17, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. See also O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion,* 80.

of Interior Adviser on Negro Affairs W. J. Trent openly critiqued the inconsistency of this approach, noting that the same principle was not applied to the construction of facilities for White visitors. The NPS's own analysis suggested that the construction of visitor facilities helped to stimulate demand for and interest in outdoor recreation. In an address to park superintendents in 1939 Trent asserted, "Let it be known . . . that recognition is being taken of their needs and that they as other citizens are invited to enjoy the comforts and privileges of every national park area in the country and there will be increased travel of Negroes to these areas."[50] Despite Trent's appeal, the director's approach continued to shape NPS planning practices in the 1930s.

Consequently, the facilities available for White visitors in Virginia's national parks were more numerous, varied, and evenly distributed across the landscape than those constructed for Black visitors. Sites for African American recreation were frequently screened from other locations, and even were deliberately situated on separate watersheds or with separate points of entry from those developed for White visitors. At Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, lunching facilities were clearly marked as "Negro" or "White" on the 1940 master plan, with picnic areas designated for African American use at both the Fredericksburg and Wilderness battlefields. The White picnic areas at the Fredericksburg Battlefield were located along Lee Drive and were clearly visible and accessible from the main roadway. In contrast, the African American picnic area was located down a spur road at the end of a parking circle with foliage screening it from view.[51] The placement of this site within the larger park landscape was consistent with NPS planning practices at other sites (see Figure 57).

There has been some uncertainty about whether the African American picnic area located along Lee Drive was actually developed, or whether it was one of many proposed recreational areas for African American use that were never constructed. Archival records suggest that it was functional in the 1940s. The master plan indicates that latrines at the site were "proposed," but the table and fireplace units depicted on-site are not similarly marked. However, they also do not carry the descriptor "existing," as some picnic tables designated for White use on the map were.[52] Nevertheless, the park's 1945 annual report is also suggestive. It noted, "The four Lee Drive picnic areas were maintained in season, the tables varnished, and trash cans painted."[53] There are only four picnic facilities along Lee Drive denoted on the 1940 master plan—three marked for White use and one marked for African American use.

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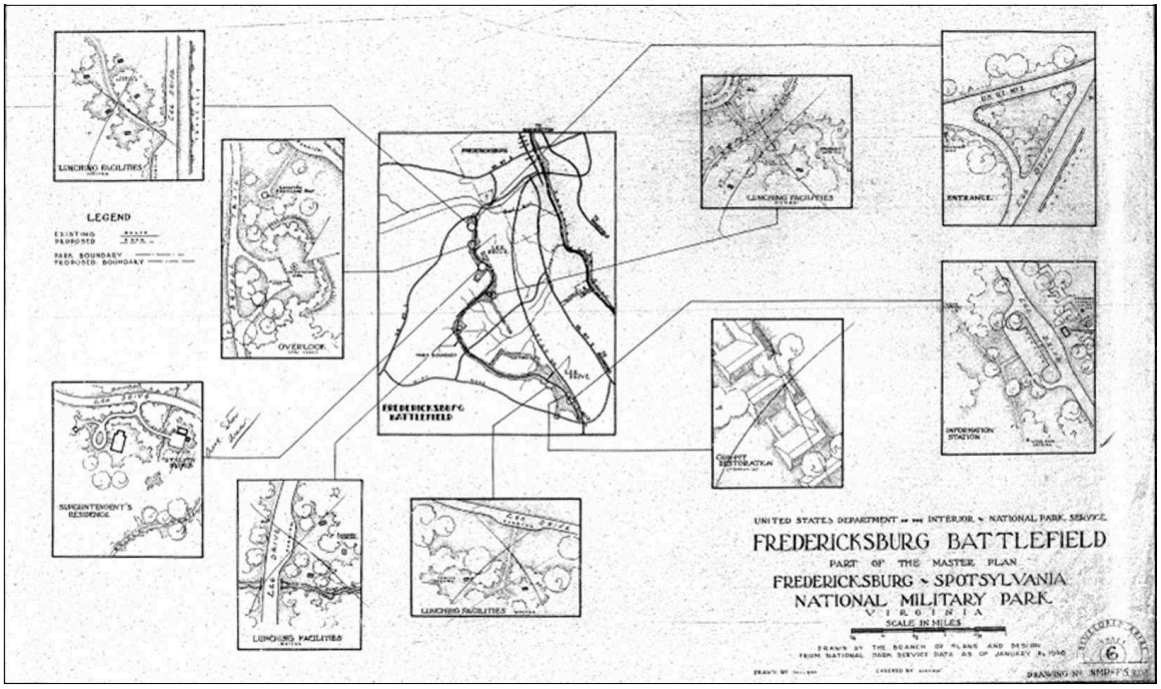
50 W. J. Trent, "The Negro and the National Parks: A Discussion before Superintendents of the National Parks," 1939, Box 10, Entry 766, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD. For more on Trent and his involvement in the desegregation of national campgrounds and this address, see Young, "A Contradiction in Democratic Government, 661–664.

51 FRSP, 1940 master plan, Denver Service Center. The distinction between a "picnic ground" and a "lunching facility" is that the latter included no fireplaces for cooking.

52 FRSP, 1940 master plan.

53 1945 FRSP Annual Report, Box 2468, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.



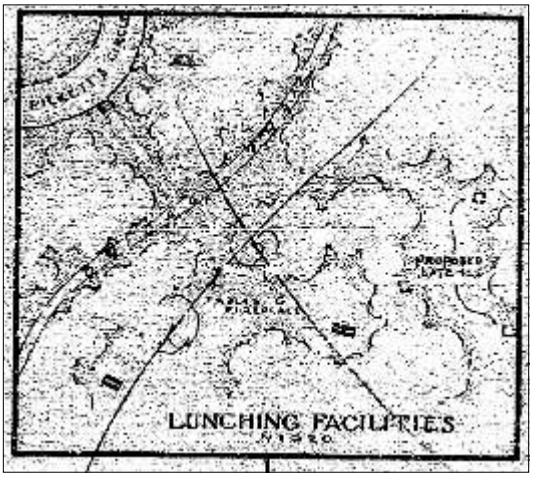


Figure 57. (Above, detail right) Picnic areas available for African American visitors at Fredericksburg Battlefield are highlighted on the 1940 master plan. Visitors reached the wooded area by following a path off Pickett's Circle. (Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, 1940 Master Plan, Denver Service Center.)

Moreover, a stone step is still in situ at the head of the trail leading off of Pickett's Circle at the location marked on the master plan—a pathway leading back to the site designated on the map for the "Negro lunching facility" is still evident on the landscape (see Figures 58 and 59).

By the time the 1945 annual report was submitted, this picnic area should have been open for desegregated use. The experiment with integrated use of picnic grounds in Shenandoah National Park was formalized as official policy, and applied to other southern national parks and monuments in the summer of 1942, in an effort to help boost "Negro morale" in support of the war effort. In July, NPS Director Newton B. Drury notified the NAACP that picnic grounds in the national parks and monuments would no longer be segregated. "The policy statement that the picnic places that are available in the national parks and monuments are open to all visitors was evolved as a result of administrative action by the Department of Interior in an endeavor to add to enjoyment of everyone visiting these areas," he wrote. When the NAACP asked for further information about why the change had been instituted, Drury explained, "Other than the fundamental concepts on which our democracy is based, there

Figure 58. Extant stone step at head of pathway off Pickett's Circle leading in the direction of the picnic ground marked as a "Negro lunching facility" on the 1940 master plan. The distinction between a "picnic ground" and a "lunching facility" is that the latter included no fireplaces for cooking. Photograph by author.

is no specific provision of law directing the establishment of such a policy."[54] Of course, this announcement did not address the segregation of campgrounds, comfort stations, or concessions like dining and overnight accommodations.

Furthermore, it must be noted that as funds for national parks were curtailed during the war, many national military parks and national monuments stopped maintaining existing picnic grounds and directed their resources toward the preservation of park features and facilities perceived as more essential, and perhaps, less controversial. Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park's 1945 annual report notes that the park was continuing to maintain the picnic grounds, but that only ten days of temporary labor was directed toward this effort. The strain on the park's wartime budget was evident: "This park has no established maintenance force either in person or on paper."[55] After the war, the NPS decided not to expend funds to revive defunct picnic grounds in historic areas, since they attracted local

54 Demaray to Frank D. Reeves, NAACP Administrative Assistant, 17 July 1942, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

55 1945 FRSP Annual Report, Box 2468, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA.

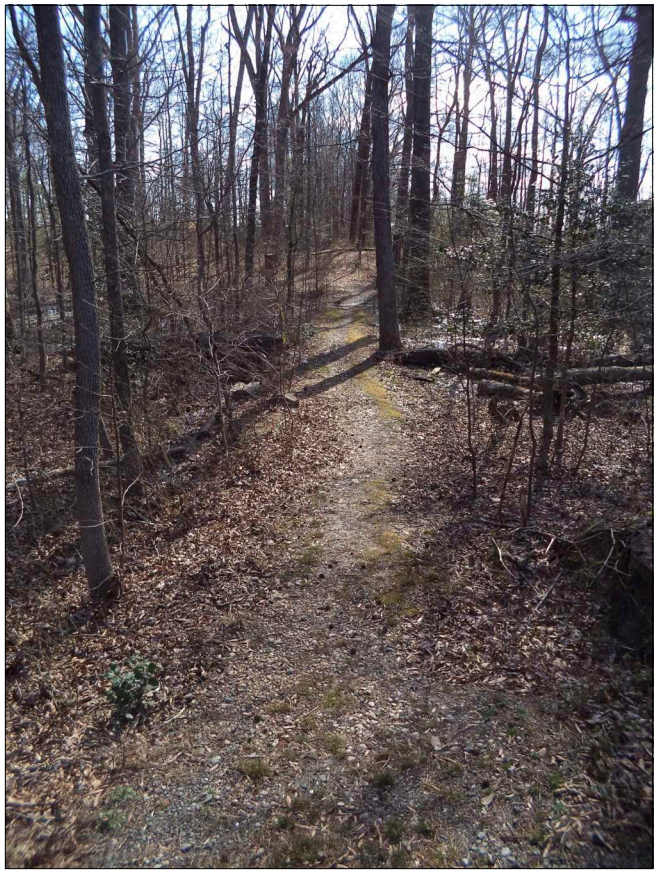


Figure 59. An established path leading from the stone step back toward the site designated as an African American picnic ground. Photograph by author.

residents who were primarily interested in "picnicking and not history."[56] In planning documents submitted throughout the 1950s, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park administrators continued to make reference to the established practice and popularity of picnicking along Lee Drive, but in a 1952 Master Plan Development Outline, park administrators noted, "these activities are not emphasized, no further development is desired."[57] Several years later, they noted recreational activities like picnicking and softball continued to be restricted to designated areas along Lee Drive. "As soon as practicable," they wrote, "all activities that detract from the historic scene should be removed to an isolated part of the park, away from the tour route."[58] Ironically, the picnic area formerly designated for African American use could have served this purpose, since it would not have been visible from the

56 Acting Director Hillory A. Tolson, to Region I Director, 23 September 1944, Box 2596c, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

57 Master Plan Development Outline, Operations, March 1952, Chatham Basement Files, FRSP, Fredericksburg, VA.

58 Museum Prospectus for Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, 13 March 1959, Chatham Basement Files, FRSP, Fredericksburg, VA.

road, but by 1965, in his proposal to consolidate picnic areas in the park, Superintendent Harrison voiced his support for combination of only "*three* picnic stops along Lee Drive" into one facility at Prospect Hill.[59] By the mid-1960s, the wooded and screened picnic area off Pickett's Circle may no longer have been maintained.

Visitor Facilities: Comfort Stations

Restrooms in historic areas, including Civil War battlefields, were also segregated. While park planners debated whether there was sufficient demand to warrant the construction of other kinds of visitor facilities, racial prohibitions related to the shared use of public restrooms were so prevalent that segregated public restrooms were constructed in southern national parks and national monuments even in the absence of large numbers of African American visitors. The segregation of restrooms—in public as well as private spaces—was a commonplace practice in the Jim Crow South and was frequently defended in the name of public health. "There is one troublesome aspect to the question of making such facilities as bathing and toilets available to everyone that has been urged upon me," Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes noted in 1945. "The allegation is made that there is a higher rate of venereal disease among Negroes." Ickes claimed that this insidious racist trope was so widely believed and popularly accepted by White visitors that it complicated the prospect of desegregating restrooms and laundry facilities in the national parks. The secretary even contemplated the establishment of restroom regulations governing the way both Black and White visitors would use comfort stations "which might have the effect of reducing the danger of contacting such diseases."[60] While these regulations were never established, the conversation surrounding them speaks directly to the racist ideology the NPS accommodated through the construction of segregated toilets and laundries.

At Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, a new administrative building was constructed with Public Works Administration funding in 1936. Restroom facilities for White visitors were developed in the basement of the building, while those for Black tourists were located adjacent to the service center in the back.[61] This distribution of facilities was racially coded, with White guests accommodated within a structure built to mimic an affluent plantation house and Black guests forced to use toilets adjacent to a utility area. The finishes within the restrooms were also different. The White restrooms were fitted

59 Superintendent Thomas J. Harrison to Chief Historian, 28 June 1965, Historian's Reading File, January–June 1965, Chatham Basement Files, FRSP, Fredericksburg, VA.

60 Ickes to Under Secretary Abe Fortas, 8 August 1945, Box 3837, Entry 749B, RG 48, College Park, MD.

61 "NPS will move to new Administration Building," *Free Lance-Star*, n.d. 1936, Box 2475, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA.

with toilet stalls constructed of polished stone (which also ran up the walls) and tiled floors.[62] The African American restrooms featured toilet stalls made of pressed metal, subway tiles, and a serviceable concrete slab floor (see Figures 60 and 61).[63] These kinds of economies illustrate the degree to which facilities in southern national parks operated outside of the bounds of the "separate but equal" jurisprudence established by *Plessy v. Ferguson*.

By 1945, after the establishment of an NPS nondiscrimination policy, the restrooms in the administrative building should have been desegregated.[64] There is limited evidence that some parks in the region retained segregation signs on established structures, while eliminat-

Figure 60. (Left) The finish on the interior fixtures in this White men's restroom located in the basement of the administrative building at Fredericksburg Battlefield. (Men's Toilet: Administration Building," construction completion photograph, 14 April 1936, Chatham Manor Archives, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, Fredericksburg, VA.)

Figure 61. (Right) The "Colored men's" restroom at Fredericksburg Battlefield was adjacent to the service center. ("Colored Men's Toilet: Service Building," construction completion photograph, 14 April 1936, Chatham Manor Archives, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, Fredericksburg, VA.

62 "Men's Toilet: Administration Building," construction completion photograph, 14 April 1936, Chatham Manor Archives, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, Fredericksburg, VA.

63 "Colored Men's Toilet: Service Building," construction completion photograph, 14 April 1936, Chatham Manor Archives, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, Fredericksburg, VA.

64 "Discrimination in furnishing public accommodations," amendment to Title 36, Chapter I, Part 2, Code of Federal Regulations, issued 4 December 1945, Box 3795, Entry 810, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

ing the practice in new construction. In 1948, the regional office clarified NPS policy after receiving several complaints from park visitors. Regional Director Thomas Allen emphasized that all such signs were to be "eliminated immediately."[65] By 1959, a Museum Prospectus for the administration building only makes reference to restrooms in the basement. Despite making note of "overloaded" facilities during periods of peak visitation, reference is not made to the restrooms located adjacent to the service building. In a similar document for the proposed visitor center at Chancellorsville Battlefield, no reference is made to segregation nor is there any evidence of an intent to develop unmarked duplicative facilities.[66]

African American Visitation

There is limited evidence of African American visitation to Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park during the period under study. Much of what is extant in the historical record is preserved in newspaper articles focused on traffic violations or other conflict within the park's boundaries.[67] While these materials tell us little about African American engagement with the park's visitor facilities or historical interpretation, they do suggest that local Black residents moved through the park's landscape.

After the war, national parks became "jurisdictional islands" in a sea of segregation, and a hostile state climate may have perpetuated established patterns of visitation. Within the national parks themselves, the removal of segregation signs was not necessarily a clear signal of a change, particularly since the NPS had minimized or removed racial designations from park literature even when segregation had been established policy. Black visitors were largely left to infer that they would be welcome in developed areas and park concessions. It was not until the early 1960s that the NPS publicly affirmed its nondiscrimination policy by requiring concessionaires to display signs intended to inform the public that discrimination was prohibited in all areas under the jurisdiction of the Department of Interior. This shift in posture may have encouraged more African American visitation. For example, in 1965, a roster of educational groups who visited the site includes an entry for 128 students from the historically Black John J. Wright School.[68] Nevertheless, in Joan Zenzen's survey of the park's interpretive practices in her 2011 administrative history, she concluded that most visitors at mid-century

65 Regional Director Thomas J. Allen, Memorandum for Superintendents and Custodians, 26 February 1948, Box A03, COLO Administrative Files, Yorktown, VA.

66 Museum Prospectus for Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, 13 March 1959; Museum Prospectus for Chancellorsville Battlefield, 29 October 1959, Chatham Basement Files, FRSP, Fredericksburg, VA.

67 For example, see FRSP Press Release, 17 April 1961, Chatham Basement Files, FRSP, Fredericksburg, VA.

68 Visitor Roster of Educational Groups on Site, Visit Statistics, 1963–66, Chatham Basement Files, FRSP, Fredericksburg, VA.

would have continued to encounter a reconciliationist narrative and a pro-Confederate account of military conflict on the battlefields.[69]

Evaluation of Extant Resources

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park actively recognizes and interprets the history of segregation within the park's boundaries. The contributions of the CCC, including those made by African American enrollees, are recognized as part of the park's historical significance. Extant structures associated with the CCC, and the landscape the companies helped to create, are recognized as contributing park resources. This history is also prominently marked for park visitors, particularly at the Fredericksburg Visitor Center, where an interpretive marker features the contributions of Company 362 in relation to the reconstruction of one of the site's most iconic and visible features, the Sunken Road Wall. Given Company 362's occupation of Camp NM-3 Camp Chancellorsville, the enrollees' contributions to the park's landscape in the surrounding area might be similarly marked.

The park has also preserved extant features associated with the White and "Colored" restrooms associated with the Fredericksburg Visitor Center, and actively interprets them with signage located immediately outside what was once the park's African American men's restroom. This highly-trafficked area is located immediately adjacent to the park's bookstore and a frequently used parking lot. Interpretation at the site also directs visitors' attention to the development of segregated picnic areas the late 1930s and early 1940s.

As noted above, there has been some question about whether the park's proposed picnic areas were fully developed or merely noted on master plans. It is well-established that those areas reserved for White use were fully functional, and it should be recognized that these sites were racially designated and are clearly associated with the park's history of segregation. Park records suggest that the site marked for African American use was also functional, although it may not have been maintained for as long as its White counterparts. Stone steps leading to the trail associated with this picnic ground on park master planning documents are still extant. These features are historically and culturally significant and should be preserved on the park's landscape. Archeological investigation may help determine the exact location of the African American picnic area and how extensively it may have been used. Similarly, park planning documents suggest that an African American picnic area was planned for Wilderness Battlefield. While there are no visible traces of this facility, archeological investigation might help determine whether it was ever in use.

During fieldwork in the park, it was noted that plans for the superintendent's residence (developed in 1938) included a separate "servants'" bedroom and bath. This space could be accessed from a separate staircase leading up from the kitchen. Such an arrangement

69 Zenzen, "At the Crossroads," 182.

could have accommodated the practice of racial segregation within this domestic space. However, it must be noted that the 1940 Census indicates that Superintendent Branch Spalding's housekeeper, Jane Taylor, was a White woman. Plans for the building also featured a toilet located in the basement. At George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Superintendent Philip Hough requested the installation of basement toilets in the park's staff quarters to address what he referred to as the "servant problem" at the monument. The proposed facilities were intended to accommodate "colored servants" working for staff.[70]

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park actively recognizes, preserves, and interprets the history of racial segregation in the park. Oral histories conducted with local residents may enhance this effort, as records of visitor interactions with these spaces on the park landscape are scant. A study of African American perceptions of the park landscape may be useful in terms of tracing this history.

70 Hough to NPS Director, 26 December 1934, Box 2220, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

CASE STUDY

George Washington Birthplace National Monument

The development of the George Washington Birthplace National Monument provides important insights into how NPS planners responded to the perceived demand for facilities for Black and White visitors in the 1930s. In the years before World War II, the NPS complied with local law and custom in the development and construction of segregated facilities for visitors in states like Virginia. In many parks, like George Washington Birthplace National Monument, the NPS developed plans for the construction of duplicative facilities but picnic grounds and recreational areas earmarked for African American travelers were not always constructed. NPS Director Arno Cammerer (1933–1940) did not believe that the need for facilities for Black visitors was "just as great" as those for White visitors, or that facilities for African American use should be constructed as a matter of course. "I don't think that we are required to anticipate all kinds of service in the parks by installing facilities unless there is a demand," he wrote. "In the Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains National Parks I have always said that we have a location for colored camps in each park, but that these will not be built unless there is a proven demand therefor."[1] This established practice of delaying the construction of African American visitor facilities perpetuated inequality within individual parks. Moreover, the strategies adopted from park to park to maintain segregation varied considerably depending on the recognition of existing "demand" for Black outdoor recreation, and created substantial inconsistency between parks.

To measure demand, some parks documented the proportion of White and Black visitors who passed through contact stations. At George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Superintendent Philip Hough reported "not more than one percent" of the monument's visitors were African American.[2] However, there is evidence that African American residents in the surrounding region used the beach at Bridges Creek to access the Potomac River and recreate during the summer months. It is unclear whether Hough included local use of the park in his statistics. In spite of this demonstrated demand and interest in the site, NPS

1 Cammerer to Demaray and Wirth, 30 September 1936, Box 17, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. See also O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion,* 80.

2 Superintendent Philip Hough to NPS Director, 16 June 1938, Box 2, Series 1, GEWA Park Central File, Colonial Beach, VA.

planners discussed but never formally developed a planned picnic area "for Colored People" at the beach, and administrators developed regulations that actively discouraged use of the site. Internal NPS correspondence reveals that the development of a separate but *unequal* landscape at George Washington Birthplace National Monument was not incidental, or a measured response to perceived demand, but part of a purposeful effort to discourage African American visitation.

Visitor Facilities

Park planners at George Washington Birthplace National Monument sought to discourage African American swimming and recreation at Bridges Creek even as they constructed new facilities to try to encourage White picnicking and boating elsewhere. In 1931, park planners noted that White visitors were already traveling to the monument with the intention of picnicking. "Something should be provided for them," recommended Assistant Landscape Architect V. Roswell Ludgate. The Wakefield Association planned to build a structure in the Duck Hall area to provide visitors with meals, overnight accommodations, access to comfort stations, and a small assemblage of souvenirs. Ludgate recommended establishing a picnic ground adjacent to the facility because of its proximity to the water "with attractive views and a cool breeze during the summer months." A picnic ground was established for the use of White visitors along with a pier.[3]

But in early surveys of the area's recreational potential, Acting Associate Director A. E. Demaray raised concerns about the accommodation of Black visitors. In the summer of 1931, Demaray visited Wakefield and "went down to the old wharf on the Potomac River beyond the burial ground and found colored people bathing there." After making inquiries, Demaray understood that this swimming hole was being used with increasing regularity by local African American residents.[4] Indeed, Park records indicate that the site was at least occasionally used by a local Black Baptist Church for river baptism.[5] Demaray proposed the development of a second recreational area with picnic tables at this location to encourage Black visitors to continue using this site and not the area being developed around Duck Hall.[6]

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3 Ludgate to Charles Peterson, 14 July 1931; Demaray to Albright, 6 August 1931, Box 591, Entry 10.1, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

4 Demaray to Albright, 6 August 1931, Box 591, Entry 10.1, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

5 Superintendent Hough, Monthly Narrative Report, August 1949, Box 15, Series 1, GEWA Park Central Files, Colonial Beach, VA.

6 Demaray to Albright, 6 August 1931, Box 591, Entry 10.1, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. See also Bruggeman, GEWA Administrative History (2006), 114; Seth Bruggeman, *Here, George Washington Was Born: Memory, Material Culture, and the Public History of a National Monument* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 151.

Park planners stationed at the regional planning office argued against this proposal. Engineer Oliver G. Taylor contended that African American use of the beach was a new development. "When the river frontage was owned by the River Holding Corporation and previously when it was owned by the Latane Brothers, negroes were not allowed to bathe here. Whenever they attempted to do so, Mr. Latane ordered them away." Taylor noted that the beach was used extensively by White residents throughout the area both for recreational swimming and bathing in the absence of plumbing in their own homes. In contrast, the NPS engineer contended that African American residents were not concerned with personal hygiene, and thus, did not need access to the beach. "The colored people do not have the habit of taking baths and they go to the river mostly because they want to do the things white people do," he wrote. This remark revealed more about Taylor's own racial politics than the habits of local African American residents. Nevertheless, Taylor suggested that the local Black population was "wise enough to know that if they can edge in on these bathing places under the Federal Government that they may get them for their exclusive use." Taylor argued that White visitors and local residents would not use an integrated beach, and consequently, if the NPS did not restrict access to the area, he predicted that the swimming hole would become locally defined as an African American beach. Since George Washington Birthplace National Monument could not provide comparable access to a swimming beach at Duck Hall, Taylor suggested this kind of development would place White visitors at a disadvantage. The NPS engineer acknowledged that "colored people must be given more consideration by the Federal Government than is given them by the state," but insisted, "some way must be found to keep them from using all our best places." Taylor recommended the establishment of a separate bathing area further downstream, and assured the national office that an alternative location "need not be as desirable a location as the one for white people." If a different bathing area for Black visitors could not be established somewhere else along the riverfront, Taylor maintained that it would be better to prohibit swimming altogether. "We just must in some manner continue to maintain the color line and keep the colored people in their places," he concluded.[7] As historian Andrew Kahrl has noted, across the southeastern US, public officials and private landowners often designated "remote, polluted, dangerous, and wholly inferior stretches of shore as suitable for 'colored' people."[8] Taylor's suggestion that the "best places" be reserved for White visitors, and that one for Black visitors "need not be as desirable" was in keeping with broader regional patterns.

Assistant Landscape Architect Charles E. Peterson also weighed in on this discussion. Peterson is most well-known for the development of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), but in 1931, the Minnesota native had just launched his career in the NPS. Peterson supported Taylor's position. "I have a copy of Mr. Taylor's letter to you which further

7 Oliver G. Taylor, Engineer in Charge, to Associate Director Demaray, 10 August 1931, Colonial National Historical Park Administrative Files, Box A03, 620-15, COLO, Yorktown, VA.

8 Kahrl, *The Land Was Ours,* 14-15.

discusses the proposition of colored people bathing at Wakefield. From my short experience with sociological matters in the South," he wrote in a veiled reference to race relations, "I would say that Mr. Taylor is entirely right. I hope that we never have to provide any kind of recreation facilities on the beach." Peterson emphasized the danger of overdevelopment at the national monument. "One thing leads to another and by encouraging bathing at this point we will also have the need in a short time for bathhouses, roads and all sorts of development work," he suggested. Notably, the landscape architect did not raise the same kinds of concerns about the extensive development of the Duck Hall picnic area. Peterson informed Demaray that he had spoken about the issue with Director Albright and the director "was not inclined to favor developments of any sort." Peterson concluded his letter by suggesting that this was also the recommendation of the landscape division as a whole.[9]

The Eastern Division of the Branch of Plans and Design developed plans for segregated visitor facilities in national parks across the state. At Yorktown, the NPS also sought to clearly demarcate the use of recreational areas on federal land and sought to maintain the color line at local swimming beaches. In the early 1930s, African American swimmers had begun to use "the river beach opposite the old Tea Room." Engineer Oliver G. Taylor consulted with local residents in Yorktown about recreational use of the site and reported that, "Mr. O'Hara and Mr. Renforth…both agree that this is no place for a bathing beach for colored people nor is there need or the desire for it by white people." Taylor acknowledged that local African American residents had limited access to other bathing beaches. "They are allowed no place to bathe in open water in the vicinity of Norfolk, Ocean Beach or Virginia Beach," he wrote, but nevertheless supported the policy of erecting "No Bathing" signs at this location. In contrast, Taylor asserted that there was no need to erect similar signs at the other beach on government property adjacent to the town beach. Both sites were "used by white people," and given local custom, "it is not probable that colored people will make any attempt to bathe on this Government beach." This differential treatment illustrates how the NPS accommodated White recreational use of landscape features, but actively discouraged and prohibited similar use of park facilities by Black visitors. Taylor later reported to the national office that the signs prohibiting bathing "had the desired effect…no bathers have been seen on this beach since the erection of the sign."[10]

At George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Demaray's proposal to build a picnic area for the use of African American visitors was deferred. The six-year program of development for the site prioritized the construction of the picnic ground at Duck Hall in 1936 and 1937 at a total cost of $800, and an African American picnic ground "for the exclusive use

9 Peterson to Demaray, 14 August 1931, Box 2217, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. See also Peterson, -Inspection Visit at Wakefield, Memorandum for Files, 29 March 1932, Box 591, Entry 10.1, NARA, College Park, MD.

10 Engineer Oliver G. Taylor to NPS Director, 15 August 1931; Taylor to Acting Associate Directory A. E. Demaray, 10 August 1931, COLO Administrative Files, Box A03, Yorktown, VA.

of colored visitors" in 1938 for $300.[11] The prioritization of facilities for White visitors meant that the Bridges Creek Beach continued to remain undeveloped, even as picnic areas, comfort stations, and the Log House concession area were constructed at Duck Hall (see Figures 62 and 63). Nevertheless, Bridges Creek—perhaps because of its pre-existing association with African American use—was informally set aside for the use of African American visitors and picnickers as needed. This segregation strategy was not formally marked on the landscape, and may have been malleable in the absence of White visitors in the Duck Hall picnic grounds, but was enforced by park staff.

This practice is poignantly illuminated in a letter of complaint written by Sister M. Dominica in the summer of 1938, after she and a group of African American schoolchildren visited the monument.[12] Dominica reported that she had previously visited the national monu-

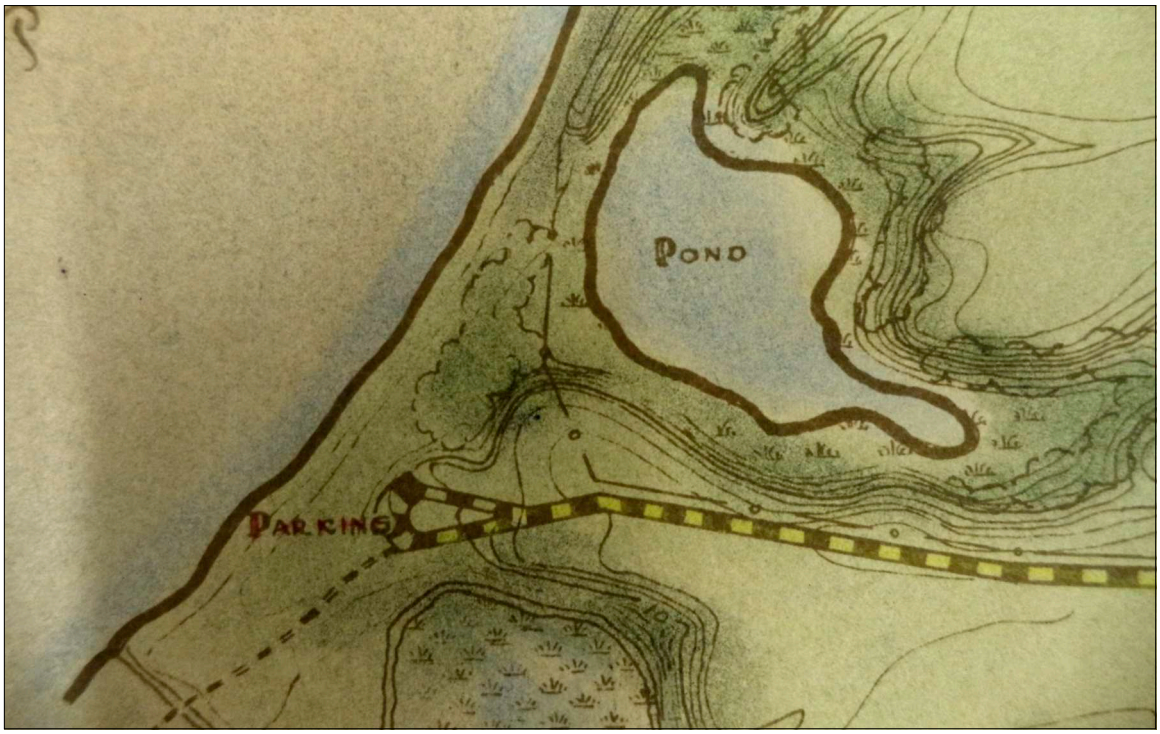

Figure 62. The undeveloped Bridges Creek Beach site as depicted on the 1939 master plan. (Located in Drawer 4, Map Case 1, GEWA Park Central Files, Colonial Beach, VA.)

11 Philip R. Hough, GEWA Superintendent, to NPS Director, 13 May 1933, Box 2219, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

12 For discussion of this incident, see also Bruggeman, GEWA Administrative History (2006), 115–116; Bruggeman, *Here, George Washington Was Born* (2008), 152–153. Bruggeman notes, "Whether or not the park was officially segregated during this period is difficult to know but, even if it wasn't, unofficial segregation was very real during the monument's first decade." It should be noted that as a social practice, official segregation could be maintained even in the absence of formalized duplicative facilities. This was not uncommon in national parks since the construction of facilities for African American visitors was rarely prioritized. Segregation was maintained through the malleable designation of space and verbal instruction from park rangers that prohibited African American visitors from enjoying certain kinds of amenities and services.

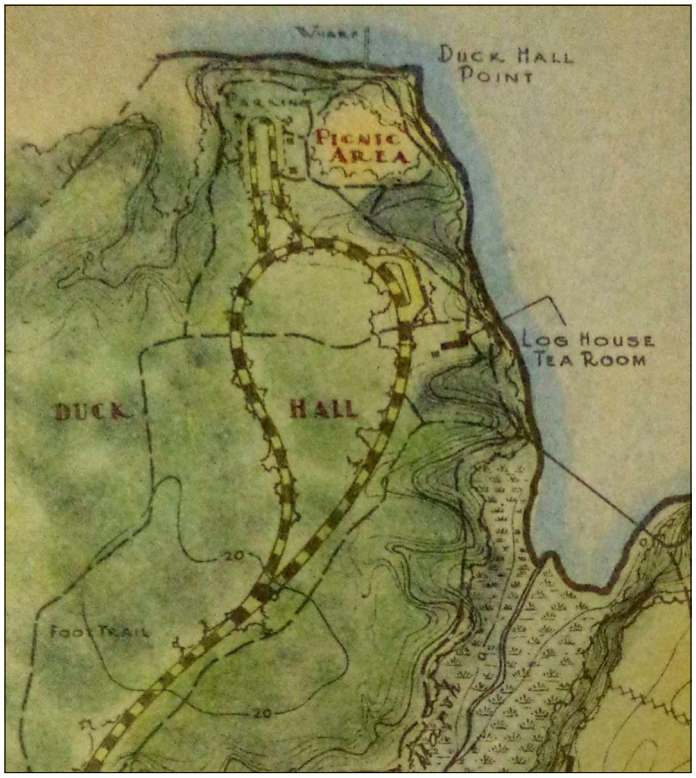

Figure 63. The Duck Hall picnic area development with the Log House Tea Room located just off the picnic loop as depicted in the 1939 master plan. (Located in Drawer 4, Map Case 1, GEWA Park Central Files, Colonial Beach, VA.)

ment during the George Washington Bicentennial Celebration in 1932 with another group of children and that they had been "treated nicely" and with "much courtesy" during their visit. On this previous visit, she recalled, the group was able to roam "at will" and ate their lunch at the picnic grounds. However, when she returned with another group in 1938, she reported that the Superintendent Philip Hough informed them on arrival that it was "the law that colored people should be segregated from the whites on the picnic grounds," and escorted them to place that "he claimed…was set aside for colored." Dominica noted that there were no picnic tables or other conveniences at the site.[13] In his own report of the incident, Hough confirmed that he had escorted the group to the Bridges Creek Beach. He inferred that the group intended to picnic because each of the children was carrying a lunch box. After learning from a park ranger that there was a "party of ladies"—presumably White women—in the "regular picnic ground," Hough took the group to the alternative location because he "felt sure" that the White visitors "would not like it to have the colored children mix with them." Hough was indignant that the group had complained of their treatment, diminishing their concerns by writing that "they were segregated for their lunch only," and noting that the White priest who

13 Sister M. Dominica to Arno Cammerer, NPS Director, 15 June 1938, Box 2, Series 1, GEWA Park Central File, Colonial Beach, VA.

accompanied the group seemed more concerned about the incident than the African American nuns and school children. Father Hamilton, Hough suggested, was "suffering from some sort of complex on racial equality," and had been uncivil and rude to park staff after the group was segregated at the beach.[14]

Notably, Hough's account reveals that this was not an isolated incident. "I fully realize that this place is open to all people," he wrote. "We have never drawn any line except in the matter of their eating." Both Sister Dominica and Hough's accounts suggest that how this line was drawn might have varied at the monument depending on the composition of visitors using various facilities at any given time. Dominica had previously eaten in the regular picnic ground, but the presence of White visitors at that location prompted Hough to insist on the relocation of the African American school group to the Bridges Creek site. Hough acknowledged the lack of picnic tables and amenities at this alternative location, but echoed the arguments of Director Cammerer, citing low African American visitation and suggesting that it was not "justifiable to maintain a special picnic ground for them."[15] In parks that did not have duplicative facilities in the 1930s, NPS employees maintained the color line by subdividing existing picnic areas or directing African American visitors to specific parts of the parks as needed.[16] This practice could create confusion and conflict, but the general justification for adopting this segregation strategy was that it was less expensive than developing duplicative facilities for a relatively small number of African American visitors.

Department of Interior Adviser on Negro Affairs W. J. Trent took issue with this approach in an address to park superintendents in 1939. Trent observed that NPS surveys revealed that Black citizens were underserved by state and local park systems, yet the NPS had demonstrated "little concern over the lack of opportunity for Negroes to use facilities of the existing [national] parks." In his remarks at the superintendents' conference, Trent illustrated his familiarity with Cammerer's policy of only constructing facilities in areas with demonstrable demand. "Usually, upon presentation of the idea that it is necessary to provide facilities for Negro use in these parks," Trent observed, "the first reply ready to hand is 'When there is sufficient demand by Negroes for facilities in these areas, then they will be provided.'" The adviser countered that the same principle was not applied to the construction of facilities for White visitors. If the NPS provided African American citizens with access to visitor facilities, Trent predicted that Black visitation would rise. "Let it be known. . .that recognition is being taken of their needs and that they as other citizens are invited to enjoy the comforts and privileges of every national park area in the country and there will be increased travel of Negroes to these areas," he asserted. "I say open the facilities—and demand will be

14 Superintendent Philip Hough to NPS Director, 16 June 1938, Box 2, Series 1, GEWA Park Central File, Colonial Beach, VA.

15 Superintendent Philip Hough to NPS Director, 16 June 1938, Box 2, Series 1, GEWA Park Central File, Colonial Beach, VA.

16 For example, see Case Studies for Shenandoah National Park and Blue Ridge Parkway, and for additional context see chapter three, Landscape of Segregation.

there."[17] Notably, at George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Superintendent Hough probably would not have argued the point. He acknowledged that the development of facilities at Bridges Creek would likely encourage African American visitation to the monument, but unlike Trent, he viewed that potential development as undesirable. "If we did we would soon be swamped with colored people," he worried. "That kind of news travels fast."[18] As Seth Bruggeman noted in his history of George Washington Birthplace, "Hough was not simply a hapless bureaucrat flummoxed by the ambiguous overlap of state and federal policy regarding segregation. Rather, we see here a superintendent determined to keep Black visitors away from Washington's birthplace."[19]

Sister Dominica's visit in 1938 also reveals rich information about the provision of other visitor services on the site. In the late 1930s, in addition to the separation of parties in picnic grounds, George Washington Birthplace National Monument drew another line in the "matter of their eating." Dominica's group was refused sit-down service at the Log House concession at Duck Hall, but was afforded with takeaway service at the Post Office near the parking lot (see Figure 64). The provision of takeaway, rather than sit-down, service for African American diners was a common way of reinforcing racial caste in the Jim Crow South, and there is evidence that NPS concessionaires adopted this practice at other parks as well.[20] Dominica reported that her group was stiffly informed that the Tea Room did not serve "soft drinks or ice cream," but that they could get both at the Post Office, a statement that she suggested was nothing more than a thinly veiled attempt to turn them away from the concession's dining room.[21] Indeed, the concessionaire's 1936 contract specifically lists selling ice cream and soft drinks among the services to be rendered, and a menu provided by the operator of the concession in 1940 indicates that a variety of beverages and ice cream were on offer at the Tea House.[22]

Hough's account of this interaction suggested that the group was not refined enough to be accommodated in the Log House Tea Room. "They piled into the dining room unde-

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17 W. J. Trent, "The Negro and the National Parks: A Discussion before Superintendents of the National Parks," 1939, Box 10, Entry 766, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD. For more on Trent and his involvement in the desegregation of national campgrounds and this address, see Young, "A Contradiction in Democratic Government," 661–664.

18 Superintendent Philip Hough to NPS Director, 16 June 1938, Box 2, Series 1, GEWA Park Central File, Colonial Beach, VA.

19 Bruggeman, *Here, George Washington Was Born* (2008), 153.

20 A. E. Demaray, NPS Acting Director, to Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes, 5 May 1939; Stanley W. Abbott, BLRI Acting Superintendent, Memo for Files, 28 June 1940, Box 2737. Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

21 Sister M. Dominica to Arno Cammerer, NPS Director, 15 June 1938, Box 2, Series 1, GEWA Park Central File, Colonial Beach, VA.

22 Mrs. Henry A. Mason, George Washington Birthplace National Monument, 1 November 1935 to 31 October 1936 Contract, Box 2224, Entry 10.2, RG 79; Mrs. Henry A. Mason, George Washington Birthplace National Monument Log House Team Room, Schedule of Basic Rates and Menu for the 1940 Season, Entry 10.2, Box 2225, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

Figure 64. George Washington Birthplace National Monument Post Office. In 1938, a group of African American school children and their chaperones were directed to this facility for soft drinks and snacks after being denied service at the Log House Tea Room. (Building File located in Box 5, Series 1, GEWA Park Central Files, Colonial Beach, VA.)

tected," he reported and suggested that one of the young boys in the group tried to steal a souvenir, which he only returned after the hostess threatened to call a park ranger. Hough contended that similar "undesirable conduct" was evident at the Post Office, and that the party left the site in the afternoon only "after considerably disturbing the postmistress."[23] Although Dominica was not privy to Hough's characterization of the group, she vouched for the behavior of the children in her charge. "We only take children on our trips who are well behaved and who know how to act as ladies and gentleman." It was Superintendent Hough, she suggested, who was uncivil and rude. "Although they are colored, this is the first time they have ever been insulted on any trip they have taken either in the North or the South," she wrote.[24]

Despite the tension surrounding the group's visit, the nuns and school children were able to tour what was then known as the Memorial Mansion. Hough's report suggests

23 Superintendent Philip Hough to NPS Director, 16 June 1938, Box 2, Series 1, GEWA Park Central File, Colonial Beach, VA.

24 Sister M. Dominica to Arno Cammerer, NPS Director, 15 June 1938, Box 2, Series 1, GEWA Park Central File, Colonial Beach, VA.

that park interpreters engaged with African American visitors, but his own account of these interactions lacked his usual enthusiasm for encouraging tourism at the site. "We do not ignore colored visitors. We answer their questions civilly and try to give them the essential information about the place," he wrote, "but we do not go out of our way to encourage them to come here."[25] Park records indicate that Superintendent Hough insisted on what he perceived to be proper decorum when minority visitors toured the Memorial Mansion (see Figure 65). In another incident in 1935, Hough reported that park staff refused to allow "two young girls of unquestionably Semitic origin" to enter the grounds because he believed they were inappropriately dressed "in bathing suits of next year's model." When they responded with "undisguised uncomplimentary remarks" and "openly resented" this attempt to restrict their access to the historic area, they were threatened with arrest.[26] It must be noted that this approach was a distinct departure from Hough's efforts to accommodate and encourage

Figure 65. Visit to Memorial House by students enrolled in the Zacata School in Westmoreland County on February 22, 1957. (Located in GEWA Park Archive, Colonial Beach, VA.)

25 Superintendent Philip Hough to NPS Director, 16 June 1938, Box 2, Series 1, GEWA Park Central File, Colonial Beach, VA.

26 Superintendent's Monthly Report, July 1935, Box 14, Series 1, GEWA Park Central File, Colonial Beach, VA.

visitation more generally. Hough regularly greeted and escorted White visitors around the grounds personally, and reported climbing numbers of visitors with pride.[27]

In her letter of complaint, Sister Dominica urged the NPS to appoint a superintendent who was not "steeped in prejudice."[28] Hough's disposition and behavior must have also been raised when Father Hamilton visited the national office in person to lodge his own complaint with Assistant Director Tolson.[29] Called to respond, Hough's reply leaves something to be desired. "Personally I do not despise a colored person as such, and there are many I have known that I like. I always treat them decently and have always been treated decently in return. In short, I can get along with them alright." In relation to the group's complaints, Hough defended his actions. "All I can say is that that is the way it is done in Virginia. If I did wrong, I am sorry," he wrote. In the next line he went on to assert that if he had done differently, the NPS undoubtedly would have received complaints from the White visitors, a constituency he was evidently more concerned with courting.[30]

Father Hamilton's appearance in Washington, DC, brought his concerns to the attention of Director Cammerer. After reviewing Hough's report, Cammerer did not reprimand the superintendent, but he did urge him to formalize the practice of segregation at the national monument. "I think the vulnerable point in your letter is the realization that picnicking places for colored people have not been provided at Wakefield," Cammerer wrote. "It is our policy, depending on demand, to have equal accommodations for colored people and for white people." It is worth noting that Superintendent Hough's account of the incident suggests he was aware of this approach to park development since he cited low African American visitation as an overriding reason for not developing a specific picnic area for Black travelers and local residents. However, at other parks, Cammerer had directed park administrators to construct facilities for African American visitors in response to complaints, and Hough had inadvertently undercut his own rationale by noting that visitation likely would increase if such a facility was provided. Cammerer directed the superintendent, "Since there apparently is a demand for this type of service at Wakefield, you should develop a picnic area for colored people that will be of equal character and attractiveness to the one provided for white people."[31]

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27 Seth Bruggeman, *Here, George Washington Was Born*, 144–149. Seth Bruggeman, "George Washington Birthplace Administrative History, 1930–2000," 97–101.

28 Sister M. Dominica to Arno Cammerer, NPS Director, 15 June 1938, Box 2, Series 1, GEWA Park Central File, Colonial Beach, VA.

29 NPS Director Arno Cammerer to Hough, 20 June 1938, Box 2, Series 1, GEWA Park Central File, Colonial Beach, VA.

30 Superintendent Philip Hough to NPS Director, 16 June 1938, Box 2, Series 1, GEWA Park Central File, Colonial Beach, VA.

31 NPS Director Arno Cammerer to Hough, 20 June 1938, Box 2, Series 1, GEWA Park Central File, Colonial Beach, VA.

Cammerer noted that Virginia statutes required the provision of separate but equal facilities in a variety of public accommodations.[32] This was also required by the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision. Moreover, the shifting ground of Supreme Court jurisprudence in the late 1930s may have pushed some within the NPS who wanted to maintain the color line to promote the development of formal facilities for African American use. The 1938 *Gaines* decision established that when no equivalent facilities were provided for African American use, public institutions were required to accommodate Black citizens in public spaces developed and designated for White people.[33] In 1939, a proposed "Picnic Area for Colored People" appears in master planning documents for the national monument at Bridges Creek: "It is proposed to locate this area at the northwestern extremity of the Burial Ground road on the banks of the Potomac River and between an existing pond and the road." The site was to include "table and bench combinations, fire places, and suitable sanitary and comfort facilities" serviced by a septic system.[34]

Nevertheless, several years later, the proposed facilities at Bridges Creek were still not constructed. Although mentioned in the site's development outline, the national office noted that the picnic area for African American visitors was not prioritized or even included on the 1941 construction program.[35] In his review of the 1941 master plan, Regional Supervisor of Historic Sites Roy Edgar Appleman continued to oppose the construction of a second picnic area at the monument.[36] This became a moot point in 1942 when the NPS formally desegregated all NPS-operated picnic areas as part of an effort to boost African American morale during World War II.[37] Nevertheless, established patterns of visitation persisted in some parks. At George Washington Birthplace National Monument, ongoing African American use of Bridges Creek beach may have continued to be an underlying reason why the site remained undeveloped. A 1961 visitor use study noted the "lack of sanitary facilities," let alone picnic tables, at the beach. Superintendent Gibbs explained "some of the problems and reasons behind the current status of the beach" to the observers, but the report only alludes to and does not explain the rationale for not providing for recreational use at the site (see Figure

32 NPS Director Arno Cammerer to Hough, 20 June 1938, Box 2, Series 1, GEWA Park Central File, Colonial Beach, VA.

33 *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada*, 305 US 337 (1938).

34 George Washington Birthplace National Monument Master Plan, 1939, Drawer 4, Map Case 1, GEWA, Colonial Beach, VA.

35 Hillory A. Tolson, Acting Associate Director, to Acting Region I Director, 18 June 1941, Box 2219, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. See also E.M. Lisle, Acting Regional Director, to Superintendent Hough, 11 July 1941, GEWA Park Central Files, Box 4, Series 1, Colonial Beach, VA.

36 Roy Edgar Appleman, Regional Supervisor of Historic Sites, Technical Review of 1941 George Washington Birthplace Master Plan, Box 2219, Entry 10.2, RG 70, NARA, College Park, MD.

37 Demaray to Frank D. Reeves, NAACP Administrative Assistant, 17 July 1942, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

66).[38] The fact that the Bridges Creek site was never formally recognized as a picnic ground or recreational area also gave local staff considerable latitude when managing visitor use of the area: "Camping, picnicking and bathing are allowed only at localities and during hours designated by the Custodian," the monument's rules and regulations read.[39]

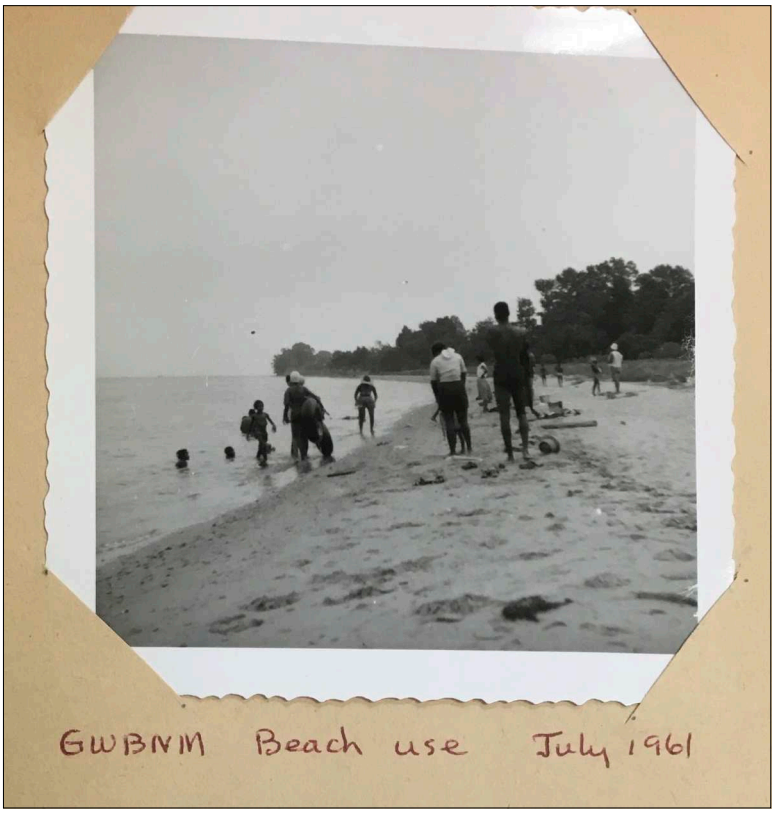

Figure 66. This photograph from a scrapbook labeled "Pictures–Maintenance, etc." captures the use of the beach near the mouth of Bridges Creek by African American visitors in 1961. (Bridges Creek Beach, 1961, located in a maintenance scrapbook, GEWA Park Archive, Colonial Beach, VA.)

38 A Study of Visitor Impressions at George Washington's Birthplace National Monument and Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, April 1961, Box 6, Entry 62, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. This visitor use study was developed for Conrad Wirth by "six departmental management trainees" in 1961.

39 A. E. Demaray, Acting Associate Director, to Robert P. White, GEWA Acting Custodian, 12 November 1931, Box 2217, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. Kahrl has also noted along many shorelines the absence of adequate parking spaces, picnic tables, locker rooms, and waste bins could serve as "indirect methods of exclusion" (Kahrl, 99).

Park Neighbors and Employees

Planning documents related to the proposed construction of segregated visitor facilities at George Washington Birthplace National Monument reflect an overriding interest in complying with local law and custom in the state of Virginia. Park documents suggest that local racial practices also governed the relationships between professional NPS staff and African American park neighbors and day laborers. In their relationships with African American park neighbors, employees, and prospective tenants, park staff adopted the local customs of the Northern Neck. African Americans were hired as domestic "help" and skilled laborers on-site, but racial hierarchies were rigorously maintained and the professional staff at the monument remained all White in the 1930s and 1940s.

Indeed, as noted in Seth Bruggeman's administrative history, Superintendent Hough sought to replicate the racial hierarchies of eighteenth-century Virginia for visitors by hiring African American laborers to work in the fields surrounding the Memorial Mansion. In his 1935 annual report, Hough painted a scene of the historic area as he imagined it had once existed. "Could one have been privileged to approach the place in colonial times it would have been a scene of activity," Hough reflected. Alongside the sight and sound of domestic animals and industry in the weaving house and blacksmith shop, "one would hear the slaves singing in the fields."[40] Visitors expected to encounter an authentic reconstruction at the memorial grounds, and Hough noted that one of the "most persistently criticised [sic] features at 'Wakefield'" was the "absence of slave quarters and other necessary outbuildings." The superintendent reported, "We have been asked a thousand times—'Where did the slaves stay?'"[41]

To create the ambiance on-site that he desired while simultaneously addressing a labor shortage at the monument, Hough contacted the national office in 1934 about the possibility of leasing park property to "a desirable colored family" for a nominal sum. Strikingly, Hough proposed to compensate the family through a sharecropping arrangement. "The man would be willing to farm our colonial crops for a one-third share provided we furnish everything except his labor," the superintendent noted. Additionally, Hough indicated an intention to hire the male head of household for occasional day labor, while "the woman's services would be needed occasionally for house cleaning work at the Mansion group."[42] Acting NPS Director A. E. Demaray did not challenge this proposal, but confirmed that requiring the tenants to pay at least nominal rent was necessary to conform with government policy. He also sent Hough language from a special use permit for possible amendment in which a lessee agreed to "fight fires voluntarily and free of charge" in exchange for nominal rent at Great Smoky Mountains

40 George Washington Birthplace National Monument, 1935 Annual Report, Box 14, Series 1, GEWA Park Central Files, Colonial Beach, VA.

41 Hough to NPS Director, 28 September 1934, Box 2, Series 1, GEWA Park Central Files, Colonial Beach, VA. See also Bruggeman, GEWA Administrative History (2006), 113-114.

42 Hough to NPS Director, 29 January 1934, Box 2219, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. See also Bruggeman, GEWA Administrative History (2006), 111.

National Park. Demaray's letter seemed to suggest that George Washington Birthplace National Monument might be able to insert a similar stipulation that would require the tenant to perform certain kinds of labor "voluntarily and free of charge" in exchange for nominal rent.[43] This kind of arrangement would have represented a form of labor troublingly close to the eighteenth-century equivalent Hough intended to evoke by repopulating the fields with African American workers. Several months after this exchange, the superintendent reported his disappointment that the family in question decided not to take up the tenancy. "When it was offered them we were surprized [sic] to have them reject the opportunity," he wrote. Whether the terms of the lease were unacceptable to the proposed tenants is unknown, but the site's location was undesirable. Hough noted that the family explained that the tenancy was "too far the children to walk to school (4 miles) and too far from a store and church to suit them as they have no car."[44]

While his efforts to recruit this young family were not fruitful, Hough cultivated a relationship with Annanias Johnson, a local African American resident with long connections to Wakefield, shortly after his arrival in Westmoreland County. The superintendent was particularly interested in Johnson's recollections about extant foundations and other cultural markers on the landscape when he was a young man.[45] But he also hired Johnson to work in the monument's tobacco fields. In his monthly reports, Hough praised Johnson's experience tending tobacco and his expertise in handling the notoriously difficult crop, but the superintendent also saw Johnson as being uniquely qualified to reconstruct Wakefield's plantation landscape. "It is of interest that Annanias worked on the Wakefield farm sixty years ago and has been intimate with all of our fields ever since then," he wrote.[46] Hough argued that Johnson provided visitors with a direct connection to the enslaved population at the estate. Born around 1860, the superintendent described Johnson as the "last Wakefield slave alive" and a "darkey of the old school who can never be replaced." Hough did not provide any documentation to support this claim, and his own notes, recorded after a conversation with Johnson in 1932, suggest that Johnson told the superintendent that he began working at Wakefield in 1875, well after emancipation. Even so, the superintendent argued that Johnson's presence at the monument provided "for authentic local color and interest" even after his health deteriorated and he was no longer able to tend to tobacco. "Many is the picture that has been snapped of him by our visitors as he worked in his tobacco patch, and we have had people say that they appreciated him more than anything else we had on the place," Hough

43 Demaray to GEWA Superintendent, 16 February 1934, Box 2219, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

44 Superintendent's Monthly Report, March 1934, Box 14, Series 1, GEWA Park Central Files, Colonial Beach, VA.

45 Testimony of Annanias Johnson, 25 July 1932, Box 1, Series 1; Superintendent's Monthly Report, August 1936, Box 14, Series 1, GEWA Park Central Files, Colonial Beach, VA.

46 Superintendent's Monthly Report, March 1933, Box 14, Series 1, GEWA Park Central Files, Colonial Beach, VA.

maintained (see Figure 67). At least implicitly, this appreciation was rooted in a romanticized and paternalistic vision of plantation slavery that Hough seemed to share—the superintendent reported that those "from the deep south especially" were particularly interested in Johnson's ancestral connection to the monument. The superintendent contended that "three of his grandparents were Washington slaves." Hough envisioned the relationship between enslaved people and the plantation landscapes they labored on as a permanent bond undisturbed by the passage of time or emancipation. As the new master of Wakefield's landscape, he cast himself in the role of providing for a faithful servant in his twilight years. "Wakefield owes him a living as much as anyone owes anything to anybody." In a troubling turn of phrase, Hough asserted, "he belongs to 'Wakefield' if anything does."[47]

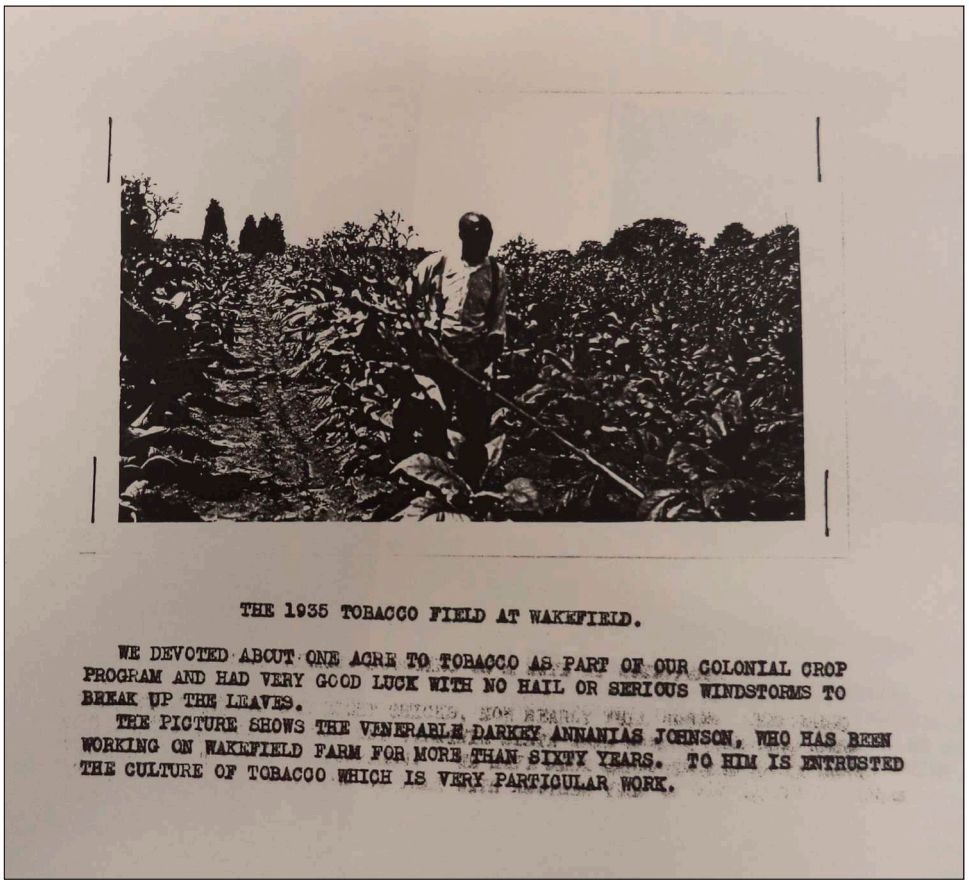
THE 1935 TOBACCO FIELD AT WAKEFIELD.
WE DEVOTED ABOUT ONE ACRE TO TOBACCO AS PART OF OUR COLONIAL CROP PROGRAM AND HAD VERY GOOD LUCK WITH NO HAIL OR SERIOUS WINDSTORMS TO BREAK UP THE LEAVES.
THE PICTURE SHOWS THE VENERABLE DARKEY ANNANIAS JOHNSON, WHO HAS BEEN WORKING ON WAKEFIELD FARM FOR MORE THAN SIXTY YEARS. TO HIM IS ENTRUSTED THE CULTURE OF TOBACCO WHICH IS VERY PARTICULAR WORK.

Figure 67. This photograph of Annanias Johnson and original caption were included in a monthly Superintendent's report forwarded to the NPS Washington office in September 1935. (Located in Box 14, Series 1, GEWA Park Central Files, Colonial Beach, VA.)

47 Testimony of Annanias Johnson, 25 July 1932, Box 1; Superintendent's Monthly Report, October 1938, Box 14; Superintendent's Monthly Report, March 1942, Box 15, Series 1, GEWA Park Central Files, Colonial Beach, VA. Bruggeman notes, "The superintendent's paternalistic urge to provide for and protect 'Uncle' Annanias was probably the most authentic relic of the Old South at Washington's birthplace" *Here, George Washington Was Born* (2008), 156–158; See also Bruggeman, GEWA Administrative History (2006), 111–113).

Day laborers and domestic staff worked in other parts of the monument as well. African American workers helped construct the original footbridge between the historic area and Duck Hall point (see Figure 68).[48] The monument relied on George Garnett, a skilled African American laborer, to rive pickets for fencing.[49] Mrs. Mason depended on "kitchen help" at the Log House Tea Room. In 1937 Hough reported that the Tea Room had been disadvantaged by the inability to attract staff. "This place is too far off the main highway to suit our local colored people," he observed.[50] Local African American residents also worked for park staff at their residences. In May 1933, the monument constructed a "small comfort station. . .in the woods in the rear of the residential area for the use of such colored people as may be working in that section."[51] This facility may have been very rudimentary. In December 1934, Superintendent Hough made a formal request for an appropriation to install two toilets in the basements of

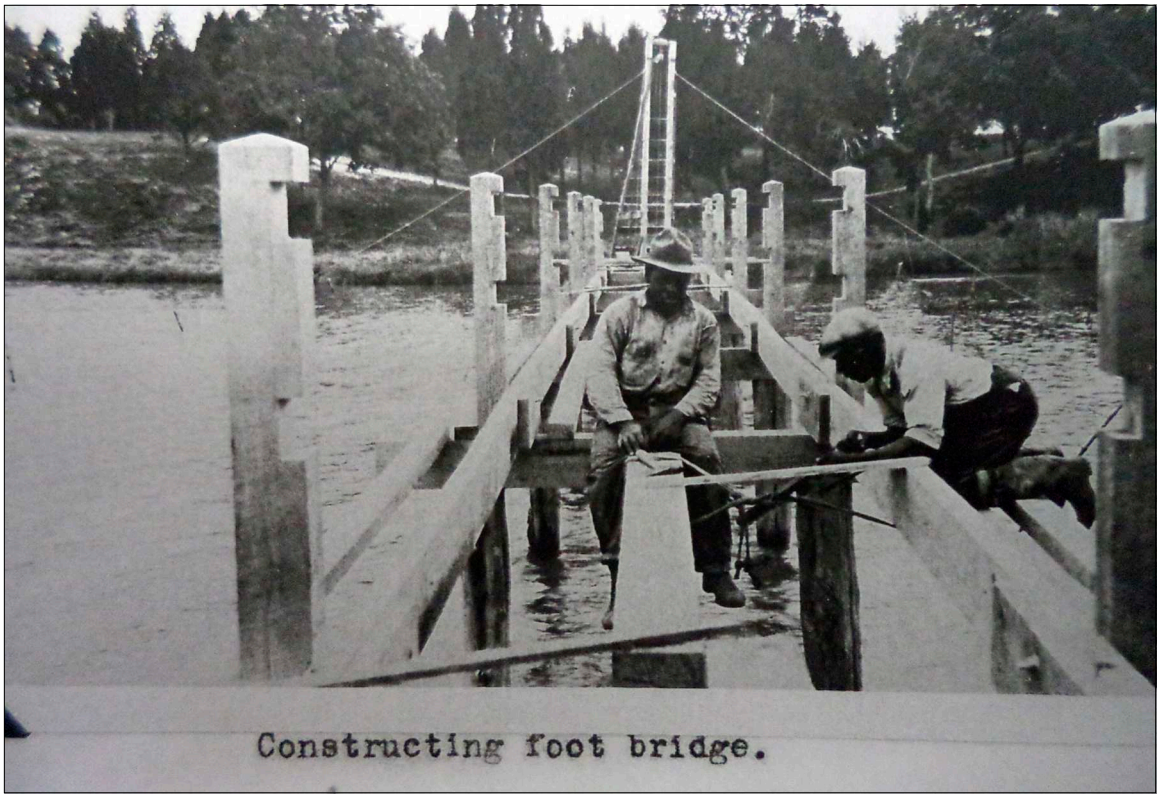

Figure 68. Workers constructing the Dancing Marsh footbridge. (Attached to Final Construction Report, Foot Bridge and Trails, George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Box 2, Series 1, GEWA Park Central Files, Colonial Beach, VA.)

48 Final Construction Report, Footbridge and Trails, 1932, Box 2, Series 1, GEWA Park Central Files, Colonial Beach, VA. See also Seth Bruggeman, GEWA Administrative History, 1930-2000 (2006), 70, ft 33.

49 Superintendent's Monthly Report, April 1957, Box 3, Series 1, GEWA Park Central Files, Colonial Beach, VA.

50 Superintendent's Monthly Report, May 1937, Box 14, Series 1, GEWA Park Central Files, Colonial Beach, VA.

51 Superintendent's Monthly Report, May 1933, Box 14, Series 1, GEWA Park Central Files, Colonial Beach, VA. See also, Bruggeman, GEWA Administrative History, 114–115.

employee residences to "help solve the servant problem at the Monument." These facilities were needed to accommodate "colored servants" working for staff. A note written in the margin approving this proposal did not critique the request, but rather that NPS planners had not anticipated the need to provide segregated facilities for Black servants. "Present buildings very new," it read, "someone should have provided for this it seems."[52] There is no evidence that the internal toilets were installed. The small comfort station in the rear wood would have been an inconvenience for Black workers on the site, and it certainly would not have been conveniently located for African American park visitors.

Even as Superintendent Hough sought to reconstruct a romanticized vision of the plantation landscape, he seemed perturbed by the presence of local African American residents near the monument's boundary who were not subject to his authority. For example, for nearly twenty years, Hough actively sought to displace Black-owned businesses that served local African American residents near the monument's entrance road. Hough's efforts to address what he believed were "unsightly" establishments at this location in the late 1930s are particularly striking, since his own interactions with prospective Black tenants just a few years earlier undoubtedly made him aware that these businesses provided needed services. Nevertheless, Superintendent Philip R. Hough petitioned for their removal.[53]

During the earliest discussions concerning the monument's development, park planners had sought to control and shape the development of commercial establishments near the monument's entrance. For example, in the early 1930s, they provided advice and guidance to Elizabeth Bowie as she sought to purchase property to develop the Wakefield Inn to provide lunch service, dining for travelers, and a small number of rental cottages near the entrance road. Bowie was a White woman and park planners hoped to persuade her to build an "attractive place" that would not impede on the park's right-of-way and encouraged her to rely on them for assistance with "proper designs and plans" for her buildings.[54] While serving as the proprietor, Bowie developed a cooperative relationship with park officials, who expressed their sympathy when the inn suffered a fire.[55] After rebuilding, Bowie expressed concern that the profitability of her enterprise was jeopardized by the construction of the Log House Tea Room and Lodge and reached out about the possibility of selling her property for incorporation into the park. NPS Director Horace Albright personally urged her not to be discouraged and advised that there was little he could do to facilitate the transfer of the land.[56]

Nevertheless, as her fortune took a turn for the worse in the wake of family illness and a second fire, Bowie repeatedly renewed her appeal to park officials and offered them right of

52 Hough to NPS Director, 26 December 1934, Box 2220, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

53 Hough to Cammerer, 24 May 1937, Box 2219, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

54 Oliver G. Taylor, Engineer, to NPS Director, 11 November 1930, Box 1, Series 1, GEWA Park Central Files, Colonial Beach, VA.

55 Robert P White to Oliver Taylor, Box 1, Series 1, GEWA Park Central Files, Colonial Beach, VA.

56 See Bowie to Albright, 5 December 1932, Box 2219, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

first refusal on the sale of her property. As the years passed, Superintendent Hough increasingly described the commercial developments at the monument's entrance as dilapidated and undesirable and urged the acquisition of the Wakefield Inn and other establishments in the immediate vicinity. "The present private owners have little conception of such [National Park] standards and lack the means to make improvements, therefore it would seem advisable for the Government to take it over," he wrote in 1935.[57] Hough's proposals were not approved, and when Bowie was finally able to sell, he anxiously reported the decline of the area. "Since Mrs. Bowie sold the Wakefield Inn it has sunk to the extent that no respectable person will be seen there. Its reputation now in this community is of the worst," Hough maintained.[58]

The superintendent's concerns about the area were not only moral, but also racial. Alongside the Wakefield Inn, the entrance was populated by two African American stores "patronized by colored people," and Hough described their appearance using derogatory language. "There has been a recent tendency for negroes to build the cheapest kind of one room shacks," he complained. "Several have been built this winter in this section, and unless it is soon controlled we will have a regular settlement of them." Hough urged Black business and property owners to take down advertising signs that he felt cluttered the entrance and diminished the visibility of the monument, but noted that the signs generated significant income and the proprietors were not inclined to comply with his requests unless the NPS intended to compensate them accordingly.[59] This issue preoccupied Hough throughout his superintendency. He raised it again in the spring of 1951, urging the NPS to consider acquiring property that had "recently been rented to a colored pair, both of whom I understand have liquor violations and convictions against them." Hough lamented, "Now it is again a colored store. It is a bad nuisance, and a confusion to visitors trying to find the entrance to Washington's Birthplace."[60]

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57 Hough to NPS Director, 22 January 1935.

58 Hough to Dr. Charles Moore, Wakefield National Memorial Association Vice president, 24, February 1937; Hough to NPS Director, 24 May 1937, Box 2219, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. Hough to Charles Peterson, Eastern Division Branch of Plans and Design, 27 October 1933, Box 2220, Entry 10.2, RG 79, College Park, MD.

59 Hough to Dr. Charles Moore, Wakefield National Memorial Association vice president, 24 February 1937; Hough to NPS Director, 24 May 1937, Box 2219, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. Hough to Charles Peterson, Eastern Division Branch of Plans and Design, 27 October 1933, Box 2220, Entry 10.2, RG 79, College Park, MD.

60 Superintendent Philip R. Hough to Region One Director, 22 May 1951, Box 2, Series 1, GEWA Park Central Files, Colonial Beach, VA.

Evaluation of Extant Resources

The cultural landscape of George Washington Birthplace National Monument was shaped by racial segregation. As noted above, the Duck Hall picnic ground and associated Log House Tea Room were developed with White visitors in mind. For nearly ten years park planners discussed the development of an African American picnic ground and recreational area at Bridges Creek to formalize the practice of segregation, and park records indicate that even in the absence of amenities, African American visitors were directed to this area as an informal picnic ground. Some who opposed the development of a second picnic ground for African American use did not do so in opposition to segregation, but rather, because they did not want to encourage African American visitation. Although the park's national register nomination form presents the landscape as a "representative example of early Park Service historical park design" under Criterion C, future amendments might acknowledge how the accommodation of segregation also shaped master planning processes.[61]

Interpretively, this history might be marked on the landscape not only at Bridges Creek Beach, but throughout the park. Even though planned duplicative facilities for African American visitors were not constructed, it should be recognized that extant resources within the park were developed and designated for the use of White visitors and that African Americans were excluded from those spaces. Several contributing structures associated with this history are still extant, including the Log House Tea Room and Lodge, the original comfort station building associated with the Memorial House Museum that currently serves as the weaving house, and the employee residences referred to as Quarters #1 and #2 in the 1930s. Other facilities, like the original comfort stations at Duck Hall picnic grounds or the post office, are no longer extant.[62]

The Log House Tea Room and Lodge (LCS No. 080332, contributing building) built in 1932,[63] and the associated picnic grounds at Duck Hall, were intended for the use of White visitors. As Seth Bruggeman has noted, the facility was constructed "with obvious nods to the colonial teas and kitchens of prior decades."[64] Park records confirm that African American visitors were denied sit-down service by the park concessionaire at the Tea Room, and that Black travelers were denied access to the picnic grounds in the presence of White guests (see Figure 69). However, park records suggest that the Log House was a site of labor for African American kitchen staff. Likewise, it might also be noted that the employee residences, Quar-

61 George Washington Birthplace National Monument, National Register of Historic Places Register Form, December 2013, p. 42. See https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/096-0026_GWBirthplaceNatlMonument_2013_NRHP_Update_Final_REDACTED.pdf

62 George Washington Birthplace National Monument, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 72.

63 George Washington Birthplace National Monument, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 11–12, 44–45, 54.

64 Seth Bruggeman, *Here, George Washington Was Born*, 122.

ters # 1 (LCS No. 102190, contributing building) and Quarters #2 (LCS No. 102192, contributing building), built in the 1930s for park staff,[65] also served as a site of labor for African American domestic workers.

These sites are evocative, and are illustrative of park planning processes which took the needs and comfort of White travelers into consideration while refusing to do the same for African American visitors. In the early years of George Washington Birthplace National Monument's development, park planners justified these practices in the name of low visitation, but park records indicate that planners and administrators strategically refused to develop amenities for Black travelers to suppress future demand.

Figure 69. Log House contributing structure in 2019. This structure provided overnight accommodations for White visitors and park staff, as well as sit-down meal service in the 1930s. Photograph by author.

65 George Washington Birthplace National Monument, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 11, 55.

CASE STUDY

Prince William Forest Park

Prince William Forest Park was developed as Chopawamsic Recreational Demonstration Area in the 1930s. RDAs were established on "sub-marginal" land deemed unproductive for agricultural use and were intended to provide for the recreational needs of underserved populations near urban areas. RDAs were developed and maintained by the NPS under the supervision of Assistant Director Conrad Wirth and the Branch of Recreational Planning and State Cooperation, and most were developed with the intention of transferring them to a permanent maintaining agency, such as a state or local park commission. However, the NPS developed Chopawamsic with the intention of retaining the area as part of the National Park System.

As early as February of 1935, NPS Director Arno Cammerer acknowledged National Capital Parks Superintendent C. Marshall Finnnan's request to retain Chopawamsic RDA as part of the National Park System. "As you point out," Cammerer wrote, "the National Capital Parks are in urgent need of an area qualifying for recreation use of private charity, semi-public, and other organizations serving the large population, particularly the low-income group, in and around Washington, DC." With direct reference to the recreational demonstration area to be established near Quantico, VA, Cammerer confirmed, "the NPS is willing to accept responsibility of maintenance and operation as far as present legislation allows." If present legislation was deemed insufficient, the director indicated that he would seek additional legislative authority.[1] Later that year, Superintendent Finnan informed RDA Project Manager Wilbur Hall that he expected to monitor the development of the Chopawamsic Recreational Demonstration Area closely "due to the fact that we expect to inherit this area as a maintaining agency."[2] Located near Washington, DC, and the NPS's national headquarters, Chopawamsic served as a model for the development of RDAs across the country and was a reflection of

1 Frank T. Carside, Acting Superintendent National Capital Parks, to Mr. Frick, 20 July 1935, Folder 1, Box 55, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection. Director Arno B. Cammerer to C. Marshall Finnan, National Capital Parks, 2 February 1936, Box 122, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

2 C. Marshall Finnan, National Capital Parks, to William R. Hall, Recreational Demonstration Project Manager, 22 November 1935, Box 124, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

the NPS's vision for the program, including the segregation of organized camping units in the southern states.[3]

Segregation in Recreational Demonstration Areas

In NPS planning documents, RDAs were designated for the exclusive use of White or Black visitors, or recommended for dual use. From the outset, Chopawamsic was marked as a park intended for dual use, where duplicative facilities for White and Black visitors would be constructed. Chopawamsic would have been considered an ideal candidate, since it was not being developed with the intention to transfer it to Virginia but would be permanently maintained by the NPS. Moreover, it was located in a geographic location with a relatively diverse population, and it was large enough to ensure that White and Black campers could occupy different parts of the park. The Branch of Recreational Planning and State Cooperation did not recommend the development of facilities for dual use in smaller RDAs, in areas intended to be transferred to state park systems, or in locations with a predominantly white population. Chopawamsic was one of only eleven RDAs designated for dual use in the southern states in the late 1930s.[4]

By 1941, when the RDA program was curtailed, facilities for African American campers had only been developed on six of these sites.[5] In many southern states, permanent maintaining agencies objected to the creation of African American organized camps. In September of 1937, the Branch of Recreational Planning and State Cooperation reported that although some southern states had been more receptive than others to the idea, the *only* operative organized camp for African American use in the southern states was located at Chopawamsic. "Prejudice makes it practically impossible to provide for Negroes on areas also intended for White use, and has so far prevented us from developing even the few portions of some of the RDAs originally planned for Negro use," the branch reported. Wirth's office noted that the NPS could proceed and develop facilities despite these objections and insist on the maintenance of these areas, but speculated that such a posture might backfire. If southern states refused these terms, the NPS might have to maintain the affected RDAs indefinitely. The Branch of Recreational Planning and State Cooperation proposed to approach the

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3 Assistant Director Conrad Wirth to Acting Director A. E. Demaray, 22 April 1935, Box 124, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park. *Recreational Demonstration Projects: As Illustrated by Chopawamsic, Virginia* (Washington, DC: GPO, n.d.), Box 22, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

4 Kenneth B. Simmons to Wirth, 22 September 1936; Wirth to Ickes, 30 September 1936; Revised List of Recreational Demonstration Projects, Waysides, and National Park Area Extensions, Embracing Lands Acquired and Optioned by the Resettlement Administration for the NPS, 16 October 1936, Box 17, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. For more on the criteria used to identify RDA's for dual use, see chapter three, Landscape of Segregation.

5 Herbert Evison, Assistant Supervisor of Recreation and Land Planning, to Elizabeth Brown, 7 March 1941, Box 17, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

development of each park on an individual basis, negotiating with state officials to try to reach agreements in a way "most satisfactory to them and to us."[6]

At Chopawamsic, these kinds of negotiations were not necessary because the park would not be transferred out of the National Park System. Nevertheless, park officials sought to maximize racial separation and prevent interracial mixing within the park by siting facilities for White and Black camps at a distance from one another on separate watersheds and providing separate points of entry. This policy was formalized in 1937, after the NPS regional office in Richmond recommended "delimiting a portion of the Chopawamsic Area to be permanently devoted to negroes and to be called by a different name."[7] This so-called "Negro area" was defined as that "section of the water-shed of the North Branch of Quantico Creek from the road leading north from Joplin and downstream to Ridge Road." This section would be "treated as an entirely separate area and used only by Negroes." An existing White boys' camp in this part of the park was redesignated for African American use, and was replaced by a new White camp along the south branch of the creek so that it would "be isolated from the above mentioned Negro section" (see Figure 70).[8]

Notably, the "Negro section" of Chopawamsic was already associated with African American occupation; residential patterns established before the development of the RDA informed the selection of this site. Roughly one-third of the residents displaced by the development of Chopawamsic RDA were African American. Batestown, a free Black community established after the Civil War, was located along the North Branch of Quantico Creek in the general vicinity of the cabin camps that would come to be known as Camp (1-B) Lichtman and Camp (4-F) Pleasant, operated for African American children by the 12th Street YMCA and the Washington Family Service Association (WFSA) respectively.[9] In July 1937, Congressman Howard W. Smith forwarded a complaint from Prince William County 4-H Clubs about the provision of African American camping within the park and the NPS's intent to turn Chopawamsic "over to colored people," noting that it would be "impossible to arrange for the white and colored people to use the same facilities successfully."[10] NPS officials informed Smith that there was no intention to use individual camps for both White and Black campers,

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6 Acting Assistant Director to NPS Director, 29 September 1937, Box 17, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

7 Herbert Evison, Region One Regional Officer, to Branch of Recreational Planning and State Cooperation, 31 March 1937, Box 17, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

8 Assistant Director Conrad Wirth, Memorandum of Understanding, 15 April 1937, Box 124, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. See also 1938 master plan, Cat. # 6553, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection.

9 Arvilla Payne-Jackson and Sue Ann Taylor, "Prince William Forest Park: The African American Experience," Department of Interior, National Capital Parks Region, 2000, Prince William Forest Park (PRWI) Cultural Resource Management Library, 61, 100. See also "Project Plan: Recreational Area Demonstration Under the Land Program, Chopawamsic Area, Virginia," United States Department of Interior and NPS, n.d., Cat #1000, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection.

10 Congressman Howard W. Smith to Director Arno B. Cammerer, 24 May 1937, Folder 1, Box 55, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection.

and that the proposed location for African American camping would be located on a separate tract. "There are only two communities anywhere near this location and both are colored communities," the congressman was assured. When local 4-H clubs were informed of the intention to locate African American camps in this area, no further objections were raised.[11]

Internal Road System and Layout

Although NPS officials did not have to negotiate their vision for Chopawamsic with a state or local maintaining agency, discussions about the development of segregated facilities within the park did precipitate conflict between local staff, regional officials, and administrators in the national office. After defining White and Black sections within the park, regional and national park planners engaged in a year-long debate about the internal road system that would service these two areas. The NPS regional office in Richmond promoted the idea of creating two completely separate entrances to the park—one for African American motorists that would steer them to the Black organized camps and a proposed day use area, and one for White visitors that would direct them to the White organized camps and day use area.[12] Planners in the national office disliked this plan for two reasons: it would double the number of contact stations and increase the staff needed to control traffic in and out of the park, and it would "require the erection of large race differentiating signs" along a major state highway that would publicly advertise the NPS's policy of segregation. Instead, they preferred a single entrance and contact station that would enable park staff to discretely point African American travelers toward the parts of the recreational demonstration area reserved for their use along a spur road.[13]

The regional office protested this counterproposal. "If we are to be realistic in our approach to recreation planning in the southern states," Regional Planner R. C. Robinson wrote, "we must recognize and observe the long-standing attitudes and customs of the people, which require, as a fundamental, that recreational areas and facilities for the two races be kept entirely separated." The alternative proposed by the national office directed African American travelers along a route that passed "within a thousand feet" of a White organized camp, and would afford patrons of the Black day use area access to all camps. This would not satisfy southern sensibilities, White or Black, Robinson suggested. Complete segregation "should not be considered discriminatory," the regional office asserted, "since it represents the general

11 C. Marshall Finnan, Superintendent National Capital Parks, to Howard W. Smith, 6 July 1937, Folder 1, Box 55, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection.

12 Herbert Evison, Acting Regional Director, to NPS Director, 29 November 1938; Inspector Schenck to Regional Director, 19 November 1938, Box 126, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

13 Conrad Wirth, Supervisor of Recreation and Land Planning, to Region I Director, 3 January 1939; Wirth to Region I Director, 8 March, 1939, Box 126, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

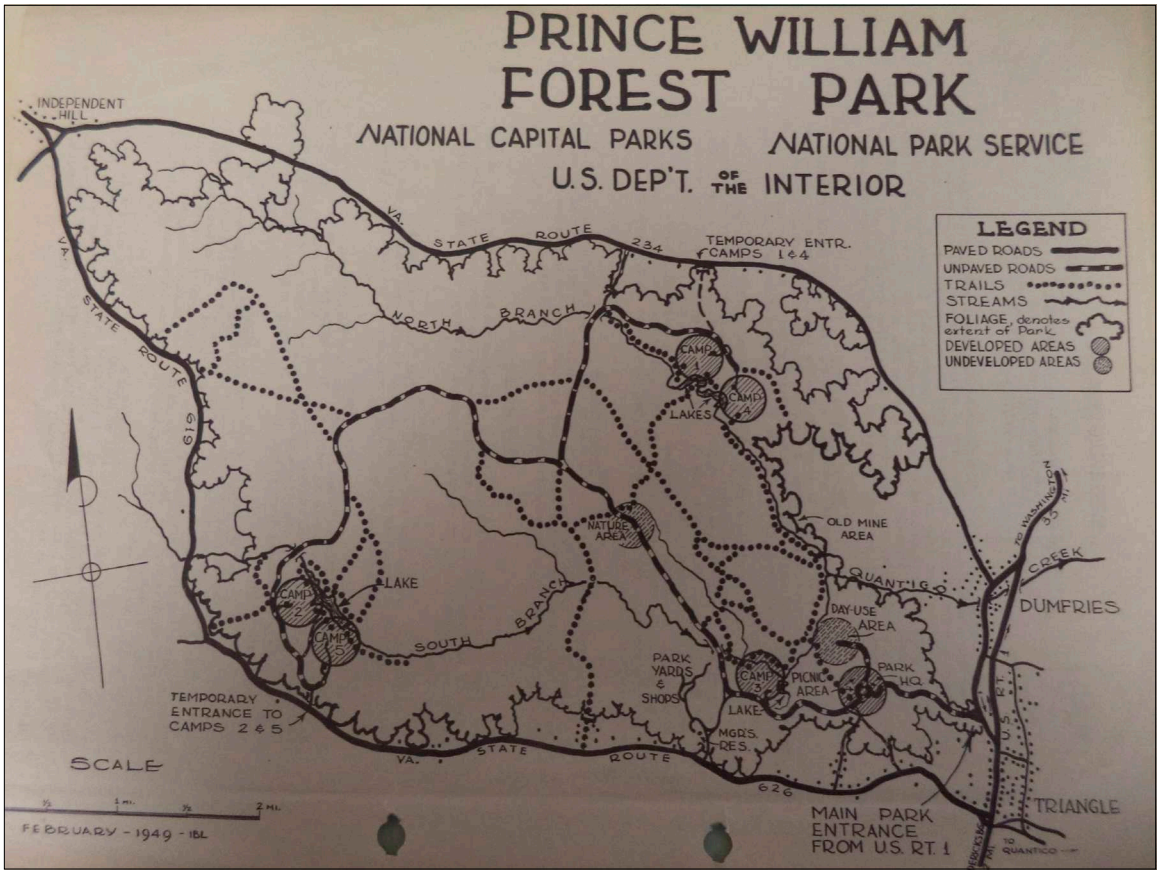

Figure 70. Layout of roads and campgrounds in Prince William Forest Park, 1949. Camps 1 and 4 designated for African American campers were established along the North Branch of Quantico Creek, whereas Camps 2 and 5 designated for White campers were established along the South Branch. (Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection, PRWI 6809.)

desire of both races."[14] NPS Director Arno B. Cammerer weighed in on this debate, and noted that the right-of-way for the proposed single entry had not yet been secured. In the meantime, he supported the regional office's proposal to maintain two separate entrances. "After all this area is in Virginia," he wrote, "All the Negro wants is comparable standards in the separate area. Most of them prefer separation."[15] It should be noted that when Robinson and Cammerer attempted to justify their approach by arguing that African American citizens preferred segregation, they pointedly ignored the guidance of the Department of Interior's own Adviser on Negro Affairs, W. J. Trent. The African American adviser argued that rather than abiding by local law and custom, "Federal agencies should urge and insist that local social

14 R. C. Robinson, Regional Recreation Planner, Technical Review, 10 January 1939; M. R. Tillotson, Regional Director, to NPS Director, 21 January 1939, Box 126, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

15 Cammerer to Wirth, 1 February 1939, Box 126, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

patterns be continually liberalized." To do otherwise, he observed, was to become complicit in the "oppression of minority groups."[16]

At a conference at Chopawamsic, regional and national planners agreed that the single entrance with internal spur roads would be the "ideal" solution for controlling traffic within the park, but until a right-of-way was secured, the park would continue to have two separate entrances.[17] Today, campers and staff continue to access the northern and southern cabin camps by way of two distinctive entrances; there is no public road that connects these two parts of the park. This arrangement, which continues to inform every camper's interaction with the park landscape, is a vestige of these discussions about how to maximize racial segregation within Chopawamsic RDA.

One of the arguments against such a system was the potential that directing White and Black visitors to specific parts of the park through signs that designated camps as "for White" or "for Negro" might draw attention to the NPS policy of accommodating segregation. However, Director Cammerer felt it would be possible to direct White and Black travelers to these separate entrances without "differentiating directional signs." The director observed that Chopawamsic would be governed by the policies of the National Capital Parks; within the District of Columbia, picnic areas, golf courses, and recreation centers were differentiated through distinctive place names. "We can give each camp and the day use area a name, or we can give the entire Negro area a separate name and the signs can be designed accordingly," Cammerer suggested.[18] In correspondence with the regional office, Acting Supervisor of Recreation and Land Planning Fred T. Johnston urged regional planners to adopt this approach on planning documents as well: "It is recommended that the discriminating labels of 'Negro' and 'White' be deleted from Service plans. These sections might be given a different name, usually suggested by some natural or historical feature."[19] Although it is no longer a part of institutional memory, the ongoing practice of referring to cabin camps by number or by the names given to them by early camping organizations on park literature and directional signs is a legacy of this effort to avoid publicizing the NPS's policy of racial segregation in the 1930s (see Figure 71).

16 W. J. Trent, "The Negro and the National Parks: A Discussion before Superintendents of the National Parks," 1939, Box 10, Entry 766, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

17 Ray M. Schenck, Administrative Inspector, to Region I Director, Box 126, Entry 100, RG 79, College Park, MD.

18 Cammerer to Wirth, 1 February 1939, Box 126, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

19 Johnston to Acting Region I Director, 29 June 1939, Box 126, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

Established Cabin Camps and Sponsoring Organizations

Cabin camps carried numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) denoting their order of construction, and letters indicating their intended camping population (B-Boys, G-Girls, F-Families). After the first season, Cabin Camp 1-B and Cabin Camp 4-F were located within the "Negro area" in the northern section of the park. Cabin Camps 2-G and 5-E were located along the southern branch of Quantico Creek and were designated for White use, as was Cabin Camp 3-F in the center section of the park. Generally speaking, the facilities provided in various cabin camps were relatively equitable, with cabins for campers arranged in units served by a washhouse and craft lodge, centralized administrative facilities located near a dining hall, and quarters

Figure 71. Directional signs within the park identified cabin camps by place name or number to obscure the policy of racial segregation. When the recreational demonstration area first opened, Camp Lichtman and Camp Pleasant were used by African American campers. (Image attached to Park Sign Program memorandum for National Capital Park Superintendent, 5 March 1959, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection, PRWI 6891.)

for staff and "help" (see Figure 72). In 1937, Assistant Director Conrad Wirth discouraged any formal acknowledgement that plans for specific camps were formulated in conversation with sponsoring camp organizations. "Our policy is not to construct camps for any particular

organization but to provide facilities to meet community needs," he wrote. "Those facilities to include provision for both white and colored children wherever such arrangement is satisfactory to the maintaining agency."[20] In practice, however, standardized NPS plans were amended at the request of specific social welfare organizations that intended to occupy the camps. Those organized in cooperation with the WFSA for families and mothers-and-tots camping, for example, featured a nursery as well as an infirmary.[21]

In her 1986 administrative history, Susan Strickland suggested that Wirth's statement, above, indicated an effort by the NPS to sidestep responsibility for the segregation of cabin camps by "placing access to the cabin camps under the control of the organization using the facility." In so doing, she wrote, the NPS "was able to bow to prevailing racial attitudes without officially endorsing racial separation."[22] In other words, Strickland asserted that camping organizations like the Boys' Club and the Girl Scouts, rather than the NPS, maintained the color line by determining which children enrolled at which camps. Certainly, these sponsoring organizations and the services they provided were segregated, and this did perpetuate patterns of racial separation when the NPS formally adopted a nondiscrimination policy after World War II. However, this was not the case at the outset. Here, Strickland has confused Wirth's reference to what was satisfactory to the permanent "maintaining agency" (typically a state or local park commission, but in the case of Chopawamsic, the NPS) for what was referred to as a "sponsoring organization" running a camp in any given season. As already noted, NPS planners were responsible for formally segregating the landscape of the RDAs in the 1930s, and as the permanent maintaining agency at Chopawamsic, NPS administrators processed applications from sponsoring organizations and assigned them to specific cabin camps within the park according to the racial designations established.

The sponsoring organizations that hosted camps in the park were determined in conversation with the National Capital Parks, the Council of Social Agencies, and representatives of the Community Chest in Washington, DC. In 1934, National Capital Parks Superintendent C. Marshall Finnian had expressed early interest in incorporating Chopawamsic RDA into the National Park System because his office was already providing nonprofit organizations in the District with access to camps in areas that he considered inadequate in terms of structural facilities, water supply, and sanitation.[23] These included Camp Good Will—operated by the WFSA—in Rock Creek Park, which was later relocated to Chopawamsic RDA, as was a sister

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20 Assistant Director Conrad Wirth to Region One Regional Officer, 20 April 1937, Box 126, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

21 William H. Savin, Washington Family Services Association Director to. H. K. Roberts, NPS Regional Officer, 4 April 1936, Box 126; H.K. Roberts, Acting Regional Officer, Third Region, to Branch of Planning and State Cooperation, 13 March 1936, Box 124, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

22 Susan Cary Strickland, "Prince William Forest Park: An Administrative History," January 1986, NPS History Division, US Department of Interior, Washington, DC. See chapter 3.

23 C. Marshall Finnan to NPS Director, 2 October 1934, Cat #14171, Box 23, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection.

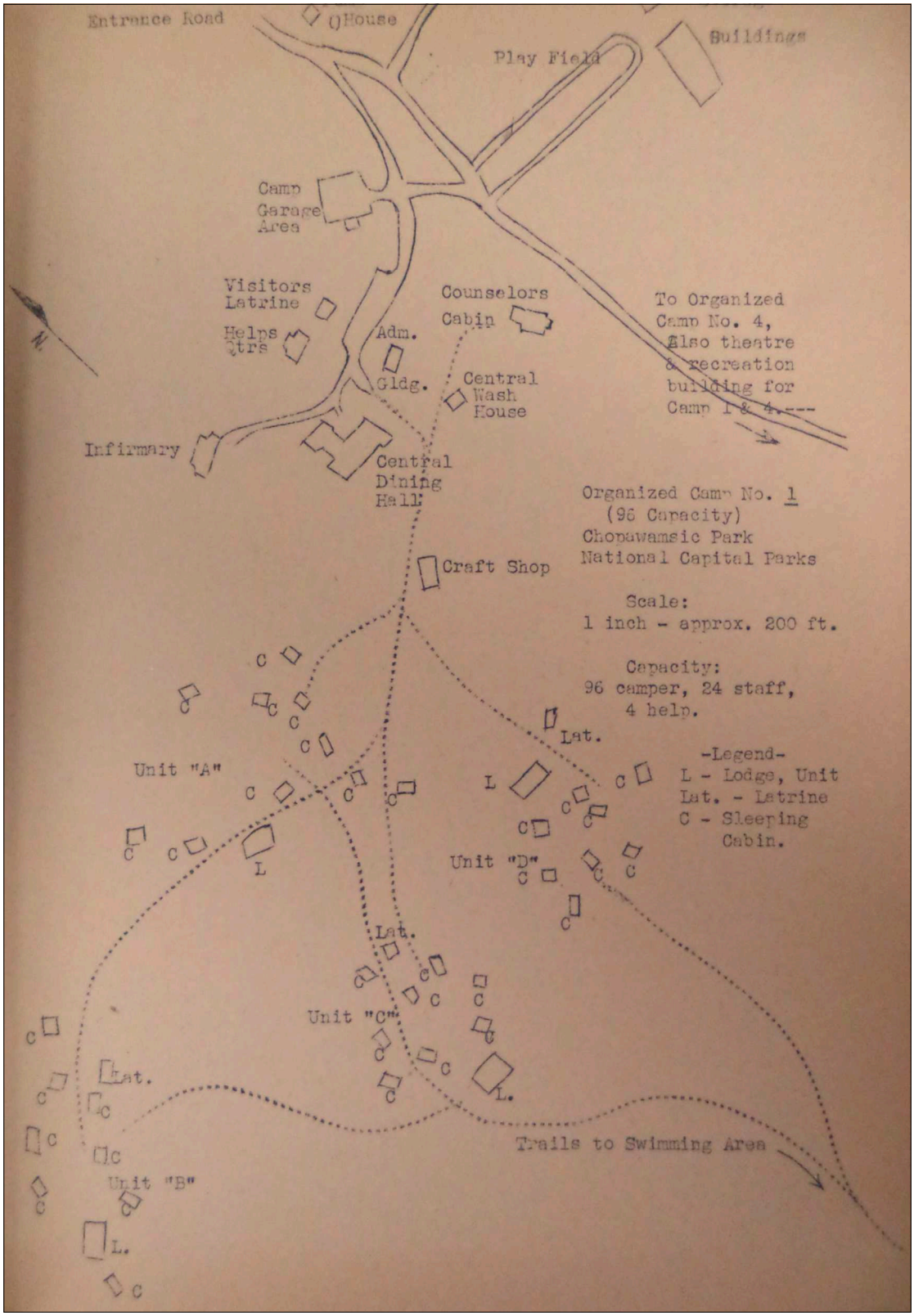

Figure 72. Cabin Camp Layout for Camp Lichtman (Camp 1) with units designated by letter and buildings like the Central Dining Hall, Central Wash House, Infirmary, and Helps' Quarters marked in an administrative core near the entrance road. (From 1950 Camp Appraisal Report, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection, PRWI 6797.)

camp (Camp Pleasant) operated for African American children near the National Harbor. The Boys' Club of Washington, DC, and the Salvation Army's Camp Happyland were also among the "charity camps" on the short list under consideration for relocation.[24] These camps were operated by social service organizations for underserved children—a target population for the recreational demonstration program more broadly—and the costs associated with sending them to camp were defrayed through donations and Washington, DC's Community Chest.[25] Campers at other camps, like the YMCA's Camp Lichtman or the Camp Fire Girls' Camp Mawavi, paid a fee.

Cabin Camp 1: Camp Lichtman

In Chopawamsic's inaugural camping season in 1936, Cabin Camp 1-B was occupied by White campers from the Boys' Club of Washington, DC.[26] However, following the formal segregation of the park landscape in 1937, this cabin camp was assigned to African American campers associated with the WFSA's Camp Pleasant (as they awaited completion of Camp 4-F) and later the 12th Street YMCA. In his correspondence with Susan Strickland for her 1986 administrative history, Chopawamsic Manager Ira B. Lykes did not recall the reassignment of this camp, which preceded the 1939 start of his tenure. "I would prefer not to be drawn into any controversy in the matter of so-called 'segregation,'" he wrote. "As I said, the first camp built was assigned to blacks."[27] In her history, Strickland suggested that that "Camp One was built in the section set aside for Negroes and the facilities were designed to meet the needs of underprivileged blacks."[28] However, this is a misapprehension. As noted in Patti Kuhn and Sarah Groesbeck's more recent administrative history, Cabin Camp 1-B was initially designed for and occupied by White male campers.[29] Therefore, extant facilities in Cabin Camp 1-B should not be interpreted as explicitly designed for African American use.

Beginning in 1938, the 12th Street YMCA in Washington, DC, operated Cabin Camp 1-B as Camp Lichtman. Camp Lichtman was named after an early benefactor, Washington,

24 "Charity Camps now operated by District of Columbia organizations," n.d., Cat #1000, PRWI Cultural Resources Archive.

25 Lewis R. Barrett to Mary Edith Coulson, Council of Social Agencies, 12 October 1936, Folder 1, Box 55, PRWI Cultural Resources Archive.

26 Frank R. Jelleff and A. F. E. Horn to C. Marshall Finnan, 17 March 1936, Folder 1, Box 55, PRWI Cultural Resources Archive. A.F. E. Horn to Conrad Wirth, 2 February 1937, Bo 126, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. The Boys' Club returned Camp Reeder in Maryland.

27 Ira B. Lykes to Susan Strickland, 18 September 1985, Cat # 7505, Box SAH1, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection.

28 Susan Cary Strickland, "Prince William Forest Park," chapter 3,

29 Patti Kuhn and Sarah Groesbeck, "Prince William Forest Park: Administrative History," February 2014, NPS, 61–63.

DC, theater owner A. E. Lichtman, who helped to establish the camp in 1932.[30] Initially, Camp Lichtman organized tent camps in George Washington National Forest, but as early as 1936 the YMCA petitioned to use the facilities being developed at Chopawamsic RDA. In an article entitled "Federal Control May End National Park Jim Crow," the Baltimore *Afro-American* reported that the success of their application would be dependent on whether the National Capital Parks or Virginia would have control over the park's long-term maintenance. "If it proves to be a Federal matter, the area will be automatically opened to all citizens," the paper predicted.[31]

Despite this statement of confidence, even under the control of the National Capital Parks, representatives of social service agencies were consulted about the suitability of sponsoring organizations like the YMCA. Mary Edith Coulson of the DC Council of Social Agencies questioned the approval of the YMCA's application for a site at Chopawamsic RDA because she felt the YMCA's camp was already well situated in George Washington National Forest, but after conferring with Camp Director Lee Johnson she was satisfied he would use Chopawamsic's location near Washington, DC, to expand services available to African American boys in the city.[32] Coulson's concern may also have been animated by the fact that Camp Lichtman was not operated as a charity camp; it received a modest appropriation of $287 from the community chest in the 1938 season. But the bulk of funds required to operate the camp were collected through a bi-weekly fourteen dollar fee.[33] Although some of the families who sent their boys to Camp Lichtman—advertised as "The Nation's Finest Camp for Negro Youth"—may have been able to support this financial burden, their children were underserved and denied access to camping facilities elsewhere on account of race. Consequently, in the late 1930s and early 1940s, the YMCA actively recruited campers from surrounding communities outside of the District of Columbia, in Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware. "Because of the scarcity of camping facilities for Negro boys," the organization noted in an appeal to parents, "we are glad to be able to announce that Camp Lichtman is open to boys from Baltimore, Alexandria, Fredericksburg, Richmond, Petersburg, Newport News, Norfolk, and all other communities where there are parents who desire to give their boys the advantage of summer camping."[34]

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30 "Washington Theater Owner Donates Camps to Youths of Capitol City," *Atlanta Daily World*, 26 July 1932.

31 "Federal Control May End National Park Jim Crow," *Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), 10 October 1936.

32 Mary Edith Coulson to C. Marshall Finnan, 16 March 1938, Folder 1, Box 55, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection.

33 Lee W. Johnson, Camp Lichtman Director, to C. Marshall Finnan, 1938 Financial Statement, 1 October 1938, Folder 2, Box 55, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection. Ira B. Lykes, Chopawamsic Manager, to National Capital Parks Superintendent, 1940 Financial Statement, 20 May 1941, Box 126, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

34 Publicity Materials including 1939 recruitment letter signed by William G. Opey, Camp Lichtman Chair, and 1939 Brochure "Camp Lichtman: The Nation's Finest Camp for Negro Youth," Box 123, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

The 12th Street YMCA's Camp Lichtman also welcomed campers whose fees were covered by sponsors as well as those who secured their spot in camp through competitions. Lichtman himself sponsored a Good Citizenship Contest, awarding twenty-five scholarships to students in Washington, DC, schools who were selected on the basis of health examinations, character ratings, and school grades.[35] The accomplishments of these young campers were often featured in Black newspapers. Curley Mosley secured a spot at Camp Lichtman after winning a science competition in Washington, DC, his expenses paid through contributions made by District science teachers.[36] In 1941, Eugene Hunter and James Tucker of Norfolk, VA, were awarded a week's stay at Camp Lichtman after being recognized as champion and runner-up in a citywide marble contest sponsored by the YMCA.[37] Lichtman Theaters also sponsored a "Send a Boy to Camp" contest in Norfolk in cooperation with the Hunton Branch YMCA. Church groups nominated representatives who competed for a spot by selling tickets to Shirley Temple's *Blue Bird* to family and friends throughout the community. The Norfolk *New Journal and Guide* reported that the boys did not sell the anticipated amount of tickets, but that the contest sponsors agreed to send them to camp anyway.[38] The YMCA also was the benefactor of support from community organizations who organized benefits to raise funds to help defray the costs of operating the camp. In 1936, Dr. John R. Hawkins, financial secretary of the AME Church, organized a fundraising campaign in Washington, DC, to help keep the camp operable. The Norfolk *New Journal and Guide* reported that the church hoped to make it possible for a greater number of young people to attend camp, describing camping as "a vital experience in any boy's life."[39]

The 12th Street YMCA's Lee Johnson helped to organize the program. Johnson was born in Alexandria, VA, and joined the staff of the YMCA after attending Williams College in Massachusetts and Howard University Law School.[40] Under Johnson's leadership, the YMCA staff strove to make the camping experience as rich as possible "in order that everyone who came in contact with the program would be capable of living a fuller and more enjoyable life." Campers at Camp Lichtman engaged in a variety of activities, including nature study, athletics, archery, swimming, photography, hikes, overnight "pioneer" camping, and crafting activities (see Figure 73).[41] To facilitate this work, Johnson helped develop the Training Institute for Camp Counsellors at the 12th Street YMCA. Young people attending the institute were famil-

35 "A. E. Lichtman Offers Fifty Scholarships," *Afro-American*, 22 May 1937; "Lichtman Theatres Good Citizenship Contest Winners," *Afro-American,* 3 July 1937.

36 "Science Awards for 2 DC Pupils," *Afro-American*, 3 August 1940.

37 "Ten Norfolk Boys to Go to Camp Lichtman," *New Journal and Guide*, 16 August 1941.

38 "Four Norfolk Boys Granted Free Trip to Camp Lichtman," *New Journal and Guide*, 17 August 1940.

39 "Seek $2,000 to Aid Camp Lichtman: Prominent DC Citizens Start Fund Drive," *New Journal and Guide*, 8 February 1936.

40 Joe Shephard, "Washingtonians You Should Know," *Afro-American*, 20 April 1940.

41 Camp Lichtman, 1940 Season Highlights, Box 123, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park.

iarized with how to manage the "problems of camp life" and were provided with instruction on how to organize activities in camp. For example, in July 1943 Miss Lottie Ruff, an instructor of fine arts at Miner's Teachers College, brought some of her students to demonstrate how to engage campers in wide-ranging activities, such as jewelry-making, weaving, book repair, and the making of scrapbooks in a session on handicraft. Camp Lichtman selected its junior and senior counselors from those who completed the course.[42]

After World War II, Johnson would be followed by Thomas N. Sanders and Thomas F. Johnson as camp directors. During the school year, Johnson, a former pitcher for the Negro National League's Philadelphia Stars, served as a football coach and instructor of physical education at Howard University. Notably, before joining the YMCA's program, he had also served as director of Camp Pleasant.[43] Johnson recruited men from regional HBCUs to help run the camp's aquatics and arts programs. Sylvester Moore, the Hampton University swimming coach, joined the staff at Camp Lichtman in 1958. *The Chicago Defender* referred to Moore as a "pioneer" because of his role in establishing intercollegiate swimming among HBCUs participating in the Central Intercollegiate Athletics Association (CIAA). He was also commended for his expertise in handling small watercraft, including sailboats and canoes.[44] In 1957, Joseph W. Gilliard, Assistant Professor of Art at Hampton Institute, was charged with developing the arts and crafts program at Camp Lichtman.[45]

Many of the structures associated with this important period of occupation are extant, including the administrative building and associated restroom facility, the dining hall, staff quarters, the infirmary, and craft lodges. While the architectural integrity of Cabin Camp 1-B is more compromised than the other cabin camps in Prince William Forest Park (CCC-era cabins constructed in the 1930s were torn down and replaced in the 1980s), the historical significance of this cabin camp is substantial. As noted above, during the 1937 season, this was the first cabin camp occupied by African American campers within a southern recreational demonstration area.

Cabin Camp 2: Center Camp

Cabin Camp 2-G was designated as a "Girls Camp," but in its opening seasons was used by both male and female campers organized by the Washington, DC, Jewish Community Center (JCC). In her study of organized camping in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Abigail Van Slyck noted a surge in the popularity of Jewish camps as communities sought to maintain traditional practices during a period of rapid transformation. "Like other

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42 "Course Opens for Y Camp Counsellors," *Afro-American,* 6 May 1939; "Camp Counsellors Finish YM Training Institute," *Afro-American*, 17 July 1943.

43 "Sanders Quits 12 St. YMCA," *Afro-American*, 10 October 1953; "Howard Gridiron Coach to Direct Summer Camp," *Daily Defender* (Chicago, IL), 17 May 1956.

44 "Sylvester Moore to Teach YMCA's Swimming Class," *The Chicago Defender,* 31 May 1958.

45 "Hampton Teacher on Camp Staff," *New Journal and Guide,* 22 June 1957.

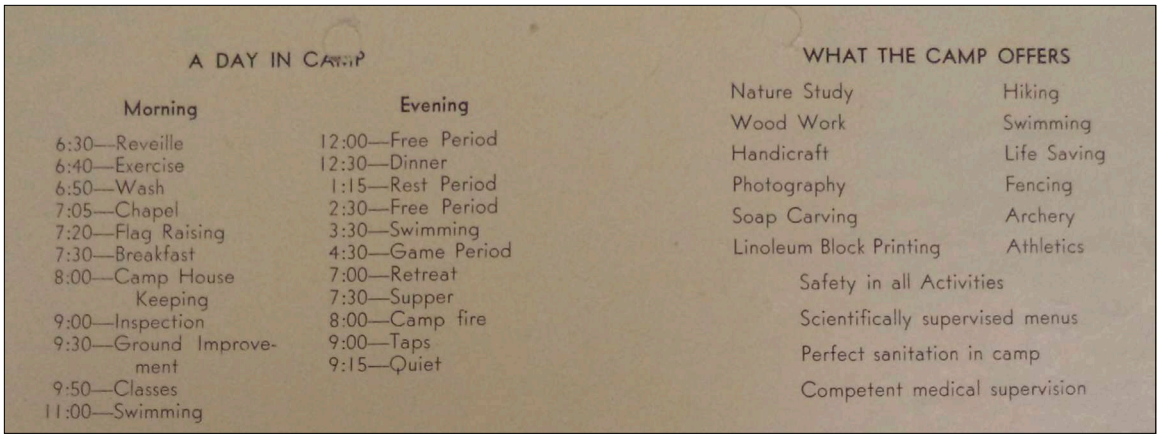

Figure 73. Camp Lichtman's daily routine and activities as presented to Julian Solomon, NPS. (Box 55, Folder 1, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection.)

camps organized around ethnic or religious affiliations," she observed, "these were typically coeducational camps."[46] The "Center Camp" was operated for underprivileged children and operated through donations rather than fees.[47]

In his 1937 annual report, Camp Director Isaac B. Simon praised the professionalism of NPS officials and their consideration for the less fortunate. In doing so, Simon gestured to the rising tide of fascism and anti-Semitic sentiment in the late 1930s: "In contrast to the madness and horror that stalk abroad in so large a part of our world today, it makes me thank God for our country. More power to its ideals, and to its officers and citizens engaged in upholding them!" Simon urged the JCC's Center Camp Committee to work diligently toward making the camp "superior to most and inferior to none." As one of two "pioneer" camps operable in the RDAs, Simon felt that park officials would look favorably or unfavorably on future applications from Jewish social organizations wishing to use organized camping facilities based on their perception of the camp. "We are," Simon wrote, "making an impression by which other Jewish groups the country over may be judged."[48]

Despite this perceived burden of responsibility, Associate Recreational Specialist Stanley M. Hawkins was unimpressed with the first two years of the camp's operation. Hawkins was critical of the administrative organization of the camp, including what he perceived to be a lack of clear leadership. He also criticized the camp's practice of hiring "busboys" who were extended the opportunity to join the camp despite exceeding the maximum age of fourteen established by administrators (see Figure 74). Stanley faulted their inexperience in the kitchen

46 Abigail A. Van Slyck, *A Manufactured Wilderness: Summer Camps and the Shaping of American Youth, 1890–1960* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2006), xxvi.

47 Harry D. Goldstein, Center Camp Auditor's Report, 14 November 1938, Folder 2, Box 55, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection.

48 Isaac B. Simon, "The Center Camp: Report of the Director," Summer 1937, Folder 1, Box 55, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection.

with unsatisfactory and unsanitary food handling procedures. The recreational specialist also contended that the camp's well-developed outline of activities was not actually being implemented and that the camp afforded the young people attending with little opportunity to engage in craft and nature programs.[49] However, according to park officials, many of these perceived problems were successfully resolved by 1938.[50]

The JCC continued to make use of the camp until the 1940 season, when uncertainty about the availability of funds to operate RDAs prompted them to find another location for their camp.[51] The Arlington Girl Scouts briefly operated a camp at the location before World War II, renaming the area Camp Mawavi (Maryland-Washington-Virginia).[52] After the war, the Camp Fire Girls established a regular summer camp in the park.[53]

Cabin Camps 3-F and 4-F: Camp Good Will and Camp Pleasant

Camp Good Will (White) and Camp Pleasant (African American) were operated by the Washington Family Service Association (WFSA) in cooperation with the Community Chest and the "Send a Kid to Camp" campaign promoted by the *Washington Evening Star* (see Figure 75). The WFSA provided counseling and assistance to families in the Washington, DC, area, and also helped organize adoptions and childcare for those in need. Both camps were planned to accommodate groups of younger and older girls and boys, as well as mothers with children under the age of six. The organization occupied Cabin Camp 3-F during the 1937 season even though the facilities were incomplete, relocating Camp Good Will to the site from its previous location in Rock Creek Park. Camp Pleasant occupied Cabin Camp 1-B during the 1937 season, but moved to Cabin Camp 4-F in 1938.[54]

During Camp Pleasant's inaugural season in Chopawamsic RDA, the Baltimore *Afro-American* covered the camp's activities and the network of community associations which helped to facilitate its work. An advisory committee appealed to Black business, professional, and fraternal organizations to help organize transportation to the park for the campers. Washington physicians and nurses from Children's, Georgetown, Providence, and Freedman's

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49 Stanley M. Hawkins, Associate Recreational Specialist, Camp 2-G Appraisal Report, 5 August 1937, Folder 1, Box 55, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection.

50 Paul Goldblatt, Executive Director of the Jewish Community Center to Superintendent Finnan, 29 March 1938, Folder 1; 1938 Jewish Community Center Camp Report, 9 October 1938, Folder 2, Box 55, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection.

51 Edward Rosenblum, Executive Director of the Jewish Community Center, to Minor Pillotson, Region 1 Director, 25 March 1940, Box 126, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

52 M. C. Huppuch, Acting Senior Recreational Planner, to Region 1 Director, 8 April 1940.

53 Kuhn and Groesbeck, *Prince William Forest Park: Administrative History,* 64–65.

54 Family Service Association Report, Summer 1938, Folder 2, Box 55; See also "Send a Kid to Camp" Scrapbook, recovered in Camp 4 Kitchen Pantry, Cat #6802, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection. Russell W. Schneider, president Family and Child Welfare Services, letter to the editor, *Sunday Evening Star* (Washington, DC), 25 November 1955.

Figure 74. Meals at cabin camps were served in a centralized dining hall. Pictured here are campers from Cabin Camp 2. (Box 16 A, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection.)

hospitals volunteered to complete health examinations before each child departed for camp.[55] A committee of students from Miners' Teachers College, guided by Audrey Dickerson, organized and managed visits to the camp by family and friends, which allowed them to inspect the new facilities in the RDA, while enjoying supper with their campers and a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.[56]

The *Afro-American* also reported favorably on the experience of the children at Camp Pleasant. "Underprivileged children in Washington are getting to spend at least two weeks of their vacation in the open and learn something about fellowship and a healthy outlook on life," the paper wrote. The *Afro-American* noted, but did not comment on, the segregation of organized camps within Chopawamsic, observing that there were "camps for whites and Jews located within a small radius." At Camp Pleasant, African American children attended camp in organized units under the charge of a counselor. Camp Doctor Herbert Henderson,

55 "96 Children Sent to Camp Pleasant," *Afro-American*, 10 July 1937.

56 "Youngsters Off with Mothers for 2 Weeks," *Afro-American*, July 1937; "Camp Pleasant Will Have Visitors' Day," *Afro-American*, 24 July 1937, "Camp Group Presented in 'Midsummer Night's Dream,'" *Afro-American*, 31 July 1937.

a graduate of Howard University's medical school, monitored the campers' health in a daily clinic, while Chef Woodford Jones prepared wholesome foods. The paper suggested that the camp struck a good balance between organized activities and free time, allowing "the youngsters to do pretty much as they pleased." Camp Director Edward Lovett shared his vision for the camp. "We are trying to develop a modern ideal camp for children," he said, "where youngsters can learn something about animals, nature and the natural resources, plus a good old fashioned program of culture training, which enables them to learn how to sing together, play together, and live together." The Baltimore *Afro-American* noted that a small number of campers may have wanted to go home when they first arrived, but others enjoyed their stay at Camp Pleasant so much they "try to hide, when the next load comes down from Washington, because they do not want to leave."[57]

SEND A KID TO CAMP
Street Becomes Girl's Prison in Summer
CAMP FUND FACTS
SEND A KID TO CAMP
Julie Needs Trip, And You Can Help
CAMP FUND FACTS
SEND A KID TO CAMP
Baby and Four Others A Burden to Billy, 10
CAMP FUND FACTS
SEND A KID TO CAMP
Gift Could Take Mary
SEND A KID TO CAMP
Fun, Food, Guidance Would Help Timmy
CAMP FUND FACTS
SEND A KID TO CAMP
Illness of Mother Darkens Girl's Life
CAMP FUND FACTS

Figure 75. As part of the Washington Evening Star's "Send a Kid to Camp" campaign, the paper profiled prospective campers in a recurrent column. Each column was accompanied by a "Camp Fund Facts" bulletin, providing readers with instructions on how they could sponsor a week or more of a young person's stay in Chopawamsic RDA. (Clippings from Washington Family Services Scrapbook, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection, PRWI 6802.)

57 "DC Underprivileged Children Get Healthy Outlook at Camp" and "Photo News: Washington Youngsters Beat the Heat at Camp Pleasant," *Afro-American*, 24 July 1937.

In their first two seasons, both Camp Good Will and Camp Pleasant served underprivileged children and families from the Washington, DC, area. Initially, the late weeks of the summer in August had also been used by mothers-and-tots campers who journeyed to camp as a group (see Figure 76). However, in 1939, funds from the Community Chest were curtailed and the camping season was shortened by several weeks. As the Family Service Association sought to streamline expenses associated with the camps, they shifted away from family camping. Thereafter, these final weeks of the camping season at Camps 3-F and 4-F in Chopawamsic RDA would be used to host camps sponsored by the Washington Heart Association for children "handicapped by heart trouble." Camp Sunshine (White) and Camp Wonderland (African American) were also segregated by race and were run by WFSA camp directors who stayed on for the additional three weeks. [58]

From 1939 forward, Camps Good Will and Pleasant focused on the individual development of children ages six to twelve. Campers engaged in a variety of activities which encouraged them to interact with the natural environment surrounding the camp, as well as drama, handicraft, and music programs (see Figures 77-81). Children also helped wait tables during mealtimes and were assigned responsibilities associated with maintaining the cleanliness of cabins and washhouses. Evening programs allowed campers to show off their talents, individually or within their cabin units. In 1938, Camper Hoyt Johnson reported that he initially had the "wrong impression" of life at Camp Pleasant, but had come to enjoy it. "I spent most of my time playing games like baseball and swimming. There are other activities, however, such as woodcraft, painting, dramatics, music and work," he wrote. Johnson praised the cleanliness of the camp and the assistance of the counselors.[59] In their own reports, counselors emphasized the individual development of campers, and maintained meticulous records chronicling the physical condition, health habits, disposition, and participation of children in the camp's program. These reports were provided to the social agency that had recommended the child for the program as well as their school teacher in the upcoming year.[60]

Since Cabin Camps 3-F and 4-F were developed in cooperation with the same sponsoring agency, they provide an opportunity to directly compare and contrast the amenities provided for White campers at Camp Good Will (3-F) and Black campers at Camp Pleasant (4-F). The most notable difference was the location of the "helps' quarters" and associated restrooms. As Camp 3-F was under construction, the WFSA requested the construction of quarters for domestic employees "a little distance from any other living quarters." The

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58 Manager's Report on Camp No. 5, Report of Season Camp Operation in PRWI, 1950, #6579, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection.

59 Hoyt Johnson, "A Changed Opinion," *The Camp Pleasant Lantern,* 25 July 1938, Box 22, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

60 William H. Savin, Washington Family Services Association Director, to Herbert Evison, Acting Regional Director, 17 October 1938, Box 123; See "Procedures for the Use of Records," Family Service Association, Box 123; Carl P. Russell, Regional Director, to NPS Director, 4 December 1937, Box 124; Savin to NACA Superintendent Finnan, 3 June 1939, Box 126, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

Figure 76. "Tots" campers attended camp with their parents in "mother and tots" camps. In this image, Chopawamsic's youngest campers gather around a rabbit cage at Camp Pleasant in July 1938. (Attached to Camp Appraisal Report for Camp Pleasant, 4 July 1938, Box 123, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.)

organization also requested the construction of a separate wash house and toilet, anticipating that domestic workers in this White camp "will be colored employees."[61] This request was implemented at the site currently used as a host house for Cabin Camp 3. However, the association later determined that the "helps' quarters" had been located too far away from the dining hall, the principal site where these employees worked in the camp. Another building was constructed as "helps' quarters" immediately adjacent to the dining hall. This cabin, with its distinctive screened breezeway in the center of the building, also continues to survive. Park plans indicate that the existing toilet in the kitchen was to be expanded to include a shower for the use of African American kitchen employees. The White administrative staff then moved into the building initially designated as "helps' quarters" and enjoyed closer access to private restroom facilities that they no longer had to share with campers (see Figure 82).[62]

In contrast, when the "helps' quarters" were constructed for Camp 4-F, they were located close to the entrance of the camp, near both the dining hall and the central wash house. "No bathroom is included in the design of the 'helps' quarters' as room is provided in the

61 William H. Savin, Washington Family Services Association Director, to H. K. Roberts, NPS Regional Officer, 4 April 1936, Box 126, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

62 "Justification to provide sleeping quarters for the help in Camp 3-F," n.d., Cat #3557, Box 65, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection.

Figure 77. Canoeing at Camp Pleasant (4-F), 1950. (Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection, PRWI 5914.)

central bathhouse for their use," park planners noted.[63] This difference in the development of the camps is an indication that it was not age or gender that guided the development of separate bathroom facilities for domestic employees in Camp 3-F, but race. Maintaining separate restrooms was a priority in Camp 3-F, which was intended for the occupation of White campers and counselors, even after the "helps' quarters" were moved closer to the center of the camp. In Camp 4-F this was not a concern. In this African American camp, sharing central washroom facilities would not violate racial custom in the Jim Crow South.

At Camp Good Will (White), the presumption that domestic workers would be African American and professional staff would be White was complicated during the 1941 season, when an NPS camp appraisal report indicated that an African American woman served as the dietitian for the camp. Dietitian M. D. Bell planned and monitored the campers' meals to ensure that they were nutritious.[64] Bell may have served as the dietitian for both Camp

63 "Justification to provide sleeping quarters for the help in Camp 4-F," n.d., Cat # 3595, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection.

64 "How Uncle Sam Helped Washington Kiddies Enjoy Summer," *The Chicago Defender*, 20 September 1941.

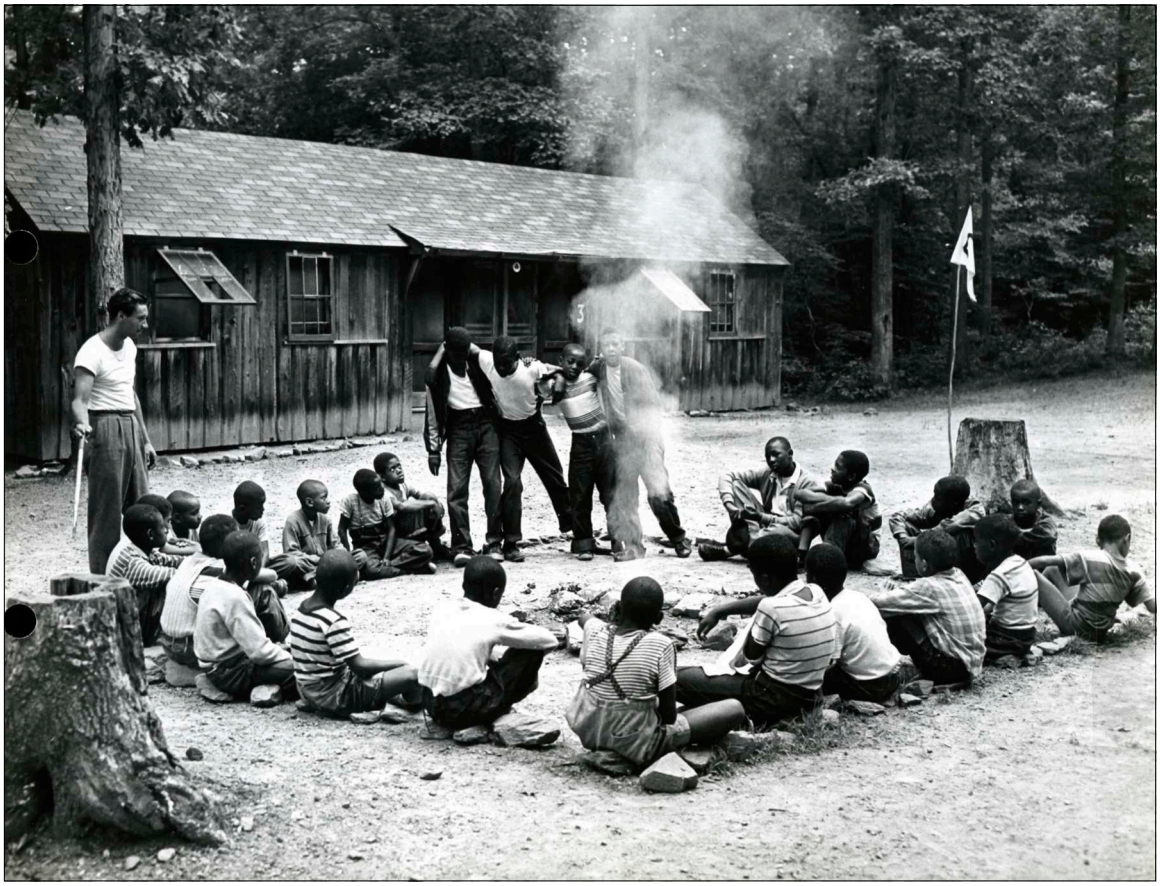

Figure 78. Campers gathered around the council circle at Camp Pleasant, 1950. (Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection, PRWI 2388.)

Good Will and Camp Pleasant, as had her predecessor, Leena White.[65] At Camp Good Will, Dietitian Bell was not housed with other administrative staff or in the "helps' quarters," but instead occupied a room in the infirmary. The camp inspector discouraged the continuation of this practice, as it reduced the number of rooms available for sick children and eliminated the possibility of operating an isolation ward. "If, in the future, a female dietitian is engaged," Chopawamsic Manager Ira B. Lykes suggested, she should "be quartered in a building other than the infirmary."[66] Given the liminal status of the WFSA's dietitian and the maintenance of racial boundaries in housing arrangements at Camp Good Will in 1941, achieving this objective would have required hiring someone else or housing Bell at Camp Pleasant with other African American professional staff.

65 "Our Dieticians," *The Camp Pleasant Lantern*, newsletter, 11 July 1938, Box 123, Entry 100, RG 79, College Park, MD.

66 Ira B. Lykes, Camp 3 Appraisal Report, 20 August 1941, Box 123, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

Figure 79. Campers singing at Camp Pleasant (4-F) in 1950. (Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection, PRWI 2393.)

The landscape at other camps in the park is also suggestive. It should be noted that the "helps' quarters" in Camp 2-G (White) were also located a substantial distance away from the administrative core of the camp and constructed with private bathroom facilities. The Washington office was not pleased with the additional costs associated with this, but regional staff insisted that the selection of the site for this facility had been approved in the field. Washington administrators recommended the construction of a second central washhouse that would serve both the professional staff and domestic workers on-site. However, when this facility was built, it was located to serve staff and campers, but far from the housing provided for domestic workers; the plan to provide private restroom facilities in the "helps' quarters" was retained.[67]

67 A. P. Bursley, Assistant Regional Officer, Region 1, to M.C. Huppuch, 1 August 1936; Conrad Wirth, Assistant Director, to Region 1 Officer, 11 August 1936; Herbert Evison, Region 1 Officer, to Branch of Planning and State Cooperation, 27 August 1936; Conrad Wirth to Region 1 Officer, 31 August 1936, Box 125, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

Figure 80. Campers practicing archery at Camp Pleasant (4-F) in 1950. (Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection, PRWI 2391.)

Cabin Camp 5: Camp Happyland

Before Chopawamsic RDA was established, the Salvation Army operated a charity camp for low-income children in Maryland called Camp Happyland. In 1939, the Salvation Army moved its program for White children to Cabin Camp 5 in Chopawamsic. African American campers continued to use the facility in Anne Arundel County, which was subsequently renamed Camp Patuxent.[68] Cabin Camp 5 accommodated a smaller number of campers than other cabin camps in the park. The Salvation Army's program provided religious guidance, civics instruction with an emphasis on democratic living, and nature study.[69]

As the park contemplated reopening the camps after World War II, Manager Ira B. Lykes described the program as one of the best offered in the park.[70] But by 1950, Lykes' assessment had changed dramatically. Camp Happyland, he wrote, "operated about as poorly

68 Kuhn and Groesbeck, *Prince William Forest Park: Administrative History,* 67.

69 Camp Happyland Annual Report, 1939, Cat #6807, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection.

70 Meeting Minutes, December 1955, Box SAH1, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection.

Figure 81. Nature Study at Camp Pleasant (4-F) in 1950. (Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection, PRWI 2384.)

as possible." Lykes chronicled a variety of complaints, ranging from administrative incompetence to the vandalism of park property and a lack of consideration for the needs of other qualified camping organizations. He opposed the renewal of the Salvation Army's permit unless the camp would recommit itself to providing "properly guided recreational opportunities for underprivileged children." Lykes maintained that the Salvation Army was primarily operating a program of religious instruction more appropriate to the camp they owned in Maryland than Chopawamsic. "We believe…that any Salvationist program inconsistent with the aims and objectives of the camping in this Park should be conducted there and not here," he concluded. [71] Despite Lykes' concerns, the Salvation Army's permit was renewed.

71 Manager's Report on Camp No. 5, Report of Season Camp Operation in PRWI, 1950, #6579, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection.

Existing Helps quarters and latrine to be used as Steff Quarters
Existing Staff Quarters to be used as Craft Shop
HELPS' QUARTERS
RDP-VA-6
JOB NO. 213

Figure 82. Topographic map indicating relocation of the "helps' quarters" in Camp 3F Good Will (White), 1938. (Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection, PRWI, 3557.)

Racial Separation and Gradual Integration After World War II

During World War II, the cabin camps were occupied by the Office of Strategic Services to train personnel for the war effort. When the cabin camps were reopened for the 1946 season, NPS policy regarding segregation had changed. In 1945, Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes amended federal regulations related to the parks, prohibiting owners, operators, and individual employees at any public accommodation "within areas administered by the National Park Service" from "discriminating against any person or persons because of race, creed, color, or national origin" by refusing to provide services "enjoyed by the general public." The amendment also prohibited individuals or concessionaires from "publicizing such facilities in any manner that would directly or inferentially reflect upon or question the acceptability of the patronage of any person or persons because of race, creed, color, or national origin."[72] These regulations applied not only to NPS employees, but organizations operating under seasonal contract. National Capital Parks implemented this new policy at parks within the District of Columbia immediately, desegregating recreational facilities located on federal land and pressuring the DC Recreational Board to abandon the practice in other parts of the District as well.[73]

Nevertheless, patterns of racial separation persisted within Prince William Forest Park (as Chopawamsic was renamed in 1948). For the most part, park officials continued to partner with the same camping organizations and assigned them to the cabin camps they had occupied before the war. Consequently, African American children camping with the YMCA and WFSA continued to camp within what had been defined as the "Negro area" while campers in other parts of the park were White. WFSA continued to operate segregated programs at Camp Pleasant and Camp Good Will for Black and White campers respectively. The Salvation Army maintained a camp for White campers within the park, and a camp for Black campers in Maryland. The YMCA, on the other hand, sent African American campers from the District to Prince William and White campers elsewhere.[74]

Traditional patterns of use within Prince William Forest Park did not begin to shift until after the Supreme Court determined that segregation was unconstitutional in the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, and institutions and organizations operating within the District of Columbia began to desegregate their services and facilities more broadly. In 1955,

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72 "Discrimination in furnishing public accommodations," amendment to Title 36, Chapter I, Part 2, Code of Federal Regulations, issued 4 December 1945, Box 3795, Entry 810, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

73 When they were first drafted, Interior and Park Service officials assumed that the nondiscrimination policy Ickes adopted in 1945 for national parks, national military parks, national historical parks, and national monuments also applied in the National Capital Parks. However, regulations related to the National Capital Parks were outlined in a different part of the Code of Federal Regulations. Consequently, in May 1949, a similar amendment was made specifically in relation to the National Capital Parks to make the application of the nondiscrimination policy in the National Capital Parks equally applicable (Mastin G. White, Solicitor, to Secretary Krug, 39 June 1949, Box 72, Entry 810, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD).

74 Report of Season Camp Operation in PRWI, 1950, #6579, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection.

the 12th Street YMCA challenged segregation within its own organization. The 12th Street YMCA was one of only two YMCA's in the greater Washington, DC, area that admitted African American members. The Baltimore *Afro-American* reported that the larger organization continued to cling "to an antiquated policy of racial discrimination," and "white" branches were determined to "dodge the integration question." In defiance, the 12th Street YMCA opened its facilities, including Camp Lichtman, to all. The *Afro-American* reported that James E. Scott, the 12th Street branch's representative on the YMCA board, believed it was "unthinkable that an organization which claims to be founded upon Christian principles, can continue to follow a policy of racial discrimination."[75] It was not until 1964 that the YMCA fully integrated its youth camps in the region by unifying its camping program for both White and African American campers at Camp Letts in Edgewater, MD.[76]

In 1956, WFSA began the process of integrating its camps by sending African American campers to Camp Good Will and White campers to Camp Pleasant. "We interchanged the camps this year to erase the racial tags which designate one for white, and the other for colored," George Green, the chair of the Summer Outing Committee reported. The move was also directed at breaking down racial barriers between campers and counselors. "The change in the camping program will give colored counsellors an opportunity this year to work with white children, and vice versa," board member Joseph Kauffmann maintained. Some observers questioned the timing of this exchange as it came almost immediately after a new swimming pool was established at Camp Pleasant. Situating White campers at the site afforded them with the opportunity to enjoy this new amenity, while Black campers continued to swim in a lake. WFSA denied the assertion that this was a determining factor, and noted that during other camping sessions in the 1956 season, White campers would return to Camp Good Will and African American children would have the opportunity to swim at Camp Pleasant (see Figure 83). The organization suggested that integration could not be affected at once because Virginian children also attended the camps and the commonwealth had adopted a posture of massive resistance in relation to desegregation. Nevertheless, they hoped to implement completely integrated camping during the August session, when the camps would be occupied solely by children from the District of Columbia. "We are trying hard to rid the camps of the 'white-colored' tags that have been attached to them for 50 years," Green noted, gesturing to the divisions which preceded the relocation of the camps to Chopawamsic RDA in the 1930s.[77] In 1957, District newspapers referred to Camp Pleasant as a "boys" camp and Camp Good Will as a "girls" camp, indicating that this process of erasing racial markers was well

75 "YMCA Turns Deaf Ear to Eisenhower's Plea: Y Refuses to Change Policy," *Afro-American*, 11 June 1955.

76 Kuhn and Groesbeck, *Prince William Forest Park: Administrative History,* 63.

77 "Camp Swimming Pool Ban Denied," *Afro-American,* 14 July 1956.

underway.[78] Separating the sexes was a common practice in organized camping, but may have also assuaged concerns about the development of romantic relationships and attachments between campers of different races and sexes in integrated camps. Previously, the WFSA had separated male and female campers at the unit level.

To further advance its program of breaking down long-established patterns of racial separation in the park, WFSA moved Camp Good Will (formerly located in Camp 3-F) to Cabin Camp 1, which carries this name today. This move also enabled the association to include campers at both camps in joint activities. Historically, African American campers at Camp Pleasant and Camp Lichtman had engaged in competitive sports, hikes, and singing competitions that echoed across the short distance between the two facilities.[79] Now, the WFSA would be able to do the same for all the White and Black children involved in its programs.

While the YMCA unified its camping program at Camp Letts in Edgewater, MD, the Salvation Army integrated its camping program by moving both White and Black campers to Prince William Forest Park in the mid-1950s.[80] Photos and associated materials provided by Christine Holz Goodier illustrate that the full range of Salvation Army camps—Girl Guards, Home League, and Senior Citizens' Camps—were integrated in the early 1960s. Records from the 1963 Girls Guards camp also indicate that Black women served on the professional staff and worked directly with campers as camp counselors.[81] Likewise, although Cabin Camp 2-G was initially designated as a White camp, photos located in the Prince William National Forest Park archive clearly illustrate the integrated use of swimming facilities and recreational programs at the site by 1968 (see Figure 84).[82]

Extant Resources and National Register Criteria

Both Prince William Forest Park's 2014 administrative history and the 2012 Registration Form nominating the park for consideration as a historic district chronicle the history of segregation in the park. Prince William Forest Park was designated as a historic district under criteria A, C, and D, with specific reference to its significance in relation to African American history under criterion A. The site's historic significance as a model for the RDA program as well as the first recreational demonstration area in the southern states to provide organized

78 "Camping Spreads Magic: Star Fund Brings Joy for 215 Boys, Girls," *Evening Star* (Washington, DC), n.d., Washington Family Services Scrapbook, Cat #6802, PRWI Cultural Resources Archive.

79 *Camp Pleasant Lantern*, camp newsletter attached to Camp Appraisal Report, 4 July 1938; *Camp Pleasant Lantern,* 17 July 1940, Box 123, Entry 100, RG 79.

80 Kuhn and Groesbeck, *Prince William Forest Park: Administrative History,* 67-68.

81 Christine Holz Goodier, Salvation Army Camp CD, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection.

82 Photographs of recreational activities at Cabin Camp 2-G, 1968, Box 16A, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection.

Figure 83. Campers using the pool at Camp Pleasant (4-F) in 1950. (Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection, PRWI 2381.)

camping facilities for African American campers has been recognized.[83] Moreover, the park's historic district nomination includes historic context related to the history of segregation in the NPS and the recreational demonstration program more broadly.[84]

However, given the architectural integrity of the vast majority of cabin camp structures in the park, with the exception of the cabins for campers in Camp 1-B, close architectural analysis of the cabin camps may also yield new information about the equitability of segregated facilities in the park. The historic district nomination notes that the park is illustrative of "the efforts of the NPS to provide equal amenities for African Americans at a time of segregation," but as the discussion of differences between the "helps' quarters" in the cabin camps above suggests, there may be meaningful distinctions between the camps that may

83 Statement of Significance, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Prince William Forest Park, Historic District, VDHR File No. 076-0299, p. 60-62.

84 National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Prince William Forest Park, Historic District, VDHR File No. 076-0299, p. 90-96.

continue to illuminate how racial segregation informed the design and layout of individual park structures. Thus, while Prince William Forest Park is recognized as significant under Criteria D because archeological sites located within the park may yield important information about prehistoric and historic settlement patterns that predate the RDA's development, extant buildings within the cabin camps may also contribute to our understanding of how segregation was implemented on the landscape with careful consideration for their material construction and design.

Figure 84. Integrated swimming at Cabin Camp 2-G, 1968. (Box 16A, Prince William Forest Park, Museum Collection.)

CASE STUDY

Shenandoah National Park

The visitor facilities within Shenandoah National Park were segregated from its inception. Before the formal development of duplicative facilities for African American visitors, racial separation was enforced by park rangers within existing picnic grounds. While previous research, like the cultural resource study "Under the Sky All of Us Are Free,"[1] has focused on the development of facilities for African American use at Lewis Mountain immediately before World War II, segregation was pervasive throughout the park with picnic areas, comfort stations, and even trailside shelters designated for the use of White or Black visitors.[2] Likewise, within the concessions developed by the Virginia Sky-Line Co., overnight accommodations and sit-down dining rooms were formally segregated, while lunch counter service at roadside stations was available to travelers of both races.

Established in 1926, Shenandoah National Park was one of the largest parks developed in the southeastern United States in the twentieth century. With its proximity to Washington, DC, and the national office, it became a model where the NPS experimented with the provision of various kinds of public service, including the development of duplicative facilities, and later, the integration of park recreational areas and concessions. The segregation of park facilities was formally prohibited in 1945 when the NPS adopted a nondiscrimination policy. Nevertheless, there is evidence that inequitable service persisted in Shenandoah National Park, and it was not until the early 1960s that statements affirming fair and equitable use of park facilities were publicly posted.

NPS Visitor Facilities and Segregation

In the early 1930s, the NPS produced master plans for the development of Shenandoah National Park which included provisions for the development of duplicative facilities for the use of White and Black visitors. This was in keeping with a broader approach to park

1 Krutko and Johnson, "'Under the Sky All of Us Are Free."

2 African American hikers along the Appalachian Trail could use three-sided open shelters but not locked four-sided shelters. The 1939 Shenandoah National Park Master Plan notes this distinction, listing the open shelters at Lewis Spring, Big Run, and Rip as available for the use of Black hikers, but not the locked type at Range View, Meadow Spring, Rock Spring, Pocosin, or Doyle River. Located in Box 10, Shelf 4, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

development throughout the southeastern United States—in those parts of the US where segregation was custom and law in restrooms, restaurants, and schools, the NPS accommodated this local practice and segregated visitor services. The NPS adopted the "general accepted thesis" that "where colored people and white people occupy approximately the same plane in the sphere of normal everyday activities no special facilities are, or need be, provided for colored people." However, in parts of the country where segregation was enforced, Landscape Division Chief H. Thompson believed "dual facilities in our National Park and Monument areas are, or should be provided."[3]

Nevertheless, the construction of duplicative facilities was costly. NPS Director Arno Cammerer did not believe that the extent of African American visitation justified the expense. "I don't think that we are required to anticipate all kinds of service in the parks by installing facilities unless there is a demand," he wrote. "In the Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains National Parks I have always said that we have a location for colored camps in each park, but that these will not be built unless there is a proven demand therefor."[4] Consequently, under Cammerer's leadership, the NPS prioritized the development of facilities for White visitors and adopted the approach of only constructing facilities for African American visitors based on demonstrable demand. This meant that the development of African American recreational areas proceeded in the southeastern United States sporadically and unevenly, and often lagged behind the development of facilities intended for White visitors.

Consequently, in the absence of developed and clearly marked duplicative facilities, those African American visitors who did come to Shenandoah National Park in the early years traversed an ambiguous landscape. When Black visitors used existing picnic areas in Shenandoah National Park, park records indicate that park rangers drew malleable racial boundaries, asking them to limit their gatherings to the far corners of picnic areas at a distance from White visitors. This practice produced conflict at sites like South River Picnic Grounds in September 1937. As Acting Superintendent Theodore Smith later recalled, a group of African American congregants from a church in Washington, DC, "appropriated a large portion of the area to use." White picnickers asked a park ranger to intercede, and when he instructed the group to restrict their gathering to a small part of the picnic ground on the other side of the driveway, Smith reported that "they became highly incensed" and the ranger feared that "real violence" might result. The ranger appealed to the group to "abide by the practice and policies that generally obtained in Virginia" and suggested that if the conflict escalated, it would inevitably reflect poorly on the Black visitors rather than the NPS. In response, members of the group "repeatedly stated. . .that racial segregation was not a policy in the national parks." The district ranger insisted that the group move and replied that "no precedent had been established in

3 H. Thompson, Chief of Landscape Division, to Chief of Planning, Status of Facilities for Colored Visitors to National Parks, 24 January 1939, Box 379, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

4 Cammerer to Demaray and Wirth, 30 September 1936, Box 17, Entry 100, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. See also O'Brien, *Landscapes of Exclusion,* 80.

the matter of segregation in National Parks" since parks within the southern states had only been recently established.[5]

Without clear directional signs, some Black visitors questioned whether racial segregation was formal policy or whether local park rangers were enforcing their own preferences. When they asked for clarity on this matter, the national office confirmed that segregation was an established and deliberate practice. For example, after a visit to Shenandoah in 1936, L. E. Wilson wrote a letter to NPS Director Arno B. Cammerer protesting the existence of segregated comfort stations in the park and asking precisely this question. "I am writing to find out whether it is your policy to establish such separation or whether this has been done without your knowledge," Wilson queried.[6] Wilson, who served as the secretary of the People's Building and Loan Association of Hampton, VA, must have been disappointed to receive a response from Acting Director A. E. Demaray which confirmed that the NPS planned to create separate visitor facilities for White and Black visitors, to "conform with the generally accepted customs long established in Virginia." Demaray suggested that racial separation would not impede, but in fact would enhance, "the complete enjoyment of the park equally by all alike." He wrote, "To render the most satisfactory services to white and colored visitors, it is generally recognized that separate rest rooms, cabin colonies and picnic ground facilities should be provided." Demaray assured Wilson that the facilities provided would be equal, and consequently, that segregation should not be interpreted as a signal that the NPS drew invidious distinctions between racial groups.[7] In a review of NPS responses to letters of complaint by the Department of Interior in 1939, Assistant Solicitor Phineas Indritz would later characterize Demaray's response to Wilson as "incomprehensible," "evasive," and "an insult to the intelligence of the inquirer."[8]

As African American visitation to Shenandoah increased in the mid-1930s, Superintendent Lassiter set aside the southern section of Elkwallow Picnic Grounds for the use of African American motorists, successfully accommodating up to two busloads of visitors at a time.[9] But Director Cammerer was not satisfied with this ad hoc arrangement. In July 1937, he observed, "There is growing demand for picnic places for colored people in Shenandoah National Park." The current practice of temporarily accommodating these visitors at "camping places for the white people…is not a good condition," the director asserted. He urged Superintendent Lassiter to begin to construct a completely separate picnic and campground

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5 Theodore T. Smith, Acting Superintendent, to Director NPS, 28 February 28 1940, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

6 L. E. Wilson to Arno B. Cammerer, 19 September 1936; L.E. Wilson to Harold Ickes, 19 September 1936, Box 1650, Entry 10.2 RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

7 Demaray to Wilson, 18 September 1936, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. See also Terence Young, "A Contradiction in Democratic Government," 655-656.

8 Indritz to Margold, 12 January 1939, marked 1st draft, unsatisfactory to Secretary, rewritten, Box 8, Entry 810, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

9 Lassiter to Cammerer, 2 August 1937, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

for African American use before the end of the summer. Cammerer acknowledged that "there will be some criticism by colored people against segregation," but suggested that the NPS would be subject to even more criticism from visitors if the current practice continued.[10] Recurrent letters of complaint from park visitors as well as reports from park rangers prompted the NPS to place pressure on the park's concessionaire (the Virginia Sky-Line Company) to construct duplicative facilities for African American visitors at Lewis Mountain—including a picnic ground, campsite, lodge, and overnight cabins. The Virginia Sky-Line Company already operated dining facilities and overnight accommodations for White visitors in other parts of the park.

Cammerer hoped to open facilities for Black motorists at Lewis Mountain in the summer of 1937 but development did not proceed as quickly as he desired. In June 1938, Superintendent Lassiter reported that the picnic ground had been successfully graded, fireplaces had been installed, and restroom facilities were nearly complete.[11] But the facilities available were not comparable to those available to White visitors in other parts of the park. The picnic area included no tables and the proposed campground remained undeveloped, as did the planned cabins and lodge to be operated by the park's concessionaire.[12]

Nevertheless, even while Lewis Mountain was still under development and not fully completed, park rangers and concessions managers began to direct African American visitors there. For example, in the summer of 1939, Sadie Evans Gough traveled with a companion from Washington, DC, to Shenandoah. On their arrival, they were informed that there were no overnight accommodations or cabins available for African American tourists, and were directed to the picnic and campgrounds at Lewis Mountain. Located in the central section of the park at a considerable distance from park entrance stations, the developed areas at Lewis Mountain were screened by foliage. At least 100 miles from home and unfamiliar with her surroundings, Gough was forced to spend an uncomfortable night in her car in an abandoned parking lot overgrown with grasses.[13] As Gough's experience suggests, with the development of Lewis Mountain, park administrators and concession managers proceeded to exclude Black travelers from other spaces. Picnic areas like South River or Elkwallow Picnic Grounds that were once sites of simultaneous—if separated—use by Black and White visitors, were formally marked as "White only."[14] When interpreting the practice of segregation in the park, it is imperative that all these sites—not just Lewis Mountain—be identified and recognized as racially segregated spaces.

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10 Cammerer to Demaray, 24 July 1937, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

11 Reed L. Engle, "Shenandoah Laboratory for Change," *CRM*, No. 1 (1998), 34.

12 Accommodations for Visitors, Shenandoah National Park, 21 February 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

13 Sadie Evans Gough to Harold Ickes, Secretary of Interior, 19 June 1939, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

14 Superintendent Lassiter to NPS Director, 23 March 1939, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

As the NPS moved toward the development of duplicative facilities, picnic grounds and their associated comfort stations were formally designated for the use of White or Black visitors. Blueprints for comfort stations in these areas generally do not carry racial labels; they were constructed using plans for "standard" comfort stations. Nevertheless, facilities built using this "standard" plan in the park before 1945 still must be understood to be segregated facilities, since many restrooms in the park were segregated through the practice of racial exclusion. As Superintendent Lassiter noted in his communication with the national office, "No separate facilities were ever provided or indicated at Dickey Ridge, Elk Wallow, Sexton Knoll, or South River picnic grounds as these areas were developed with the intention of white use only."[15] In these spaces, the exclusion of Black visitors did not necessitate the development of racially separated comfort stations.

A common model used in several areas of the park was Standard Comfort Station SHE-2002A (see Figure 85).[16] This comfort station was constructed at the Big Meadows campground,[17] the Dickey Ridge picnic ground,[18] and Elkwallow picnic ground[19] in 1937. These picnic areas were intended for White use, and the NPS used the standard plan that had been approved the year before at these sites. Likewise, several years later, in 1942, the NPS used the Standard Stone Comfort Station plan SHE-2157A[20] which had been approved in 1940 at the picnic area at Lewis Mountain intended for African American use.[21] This plan was functionally the same in its layout and design as SHE-2002A, although it was partially constructed with stone (see Figure 86). The plans for the Lewis Mountain picnic area's comfort station, as well as the plans approved for the Lewis Mountain Lodge in 1939 did not carry explicit racial labels.[22] As in White recreational areas, the NPS did not anticipate the need to accommodate both Black and White visitors at Lewis Mountain, because of the broader practice of racial exclusion.

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15 Superintendent Lassiter to Mr. Demaray, 18 May 1939, Box 1650, Entry 7, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD

16 Drawing SHE 2002A, Shenandoah National Park Standard Comfort Station, Approved in 1937, Folder 7, Drawer 5, Map Case 11, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

17 Big Meadows Campground Comfort Station Building File, Folder 42-43, Box XI-8, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

18 Dickey Ridge Picnic Ground Comfort Station Building File, Folder 36, Box XI-8, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

19 Elkwallow Comfort Station Building File, Folder 37, Box XI-8, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

20 Drawing SHE 2157A, Shenandoah National Park Standard Stone Comfort Station, Approved in 1940, Folder 7, Drawer 5, Map Case 11, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

21 Lewis Mountain Area Comfort Station Building File, Folder 44, Box XI-8, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

22 Lewis Mountain Lodge, Approved 1939, Folder 7, Drawer 5, Map Case 9, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

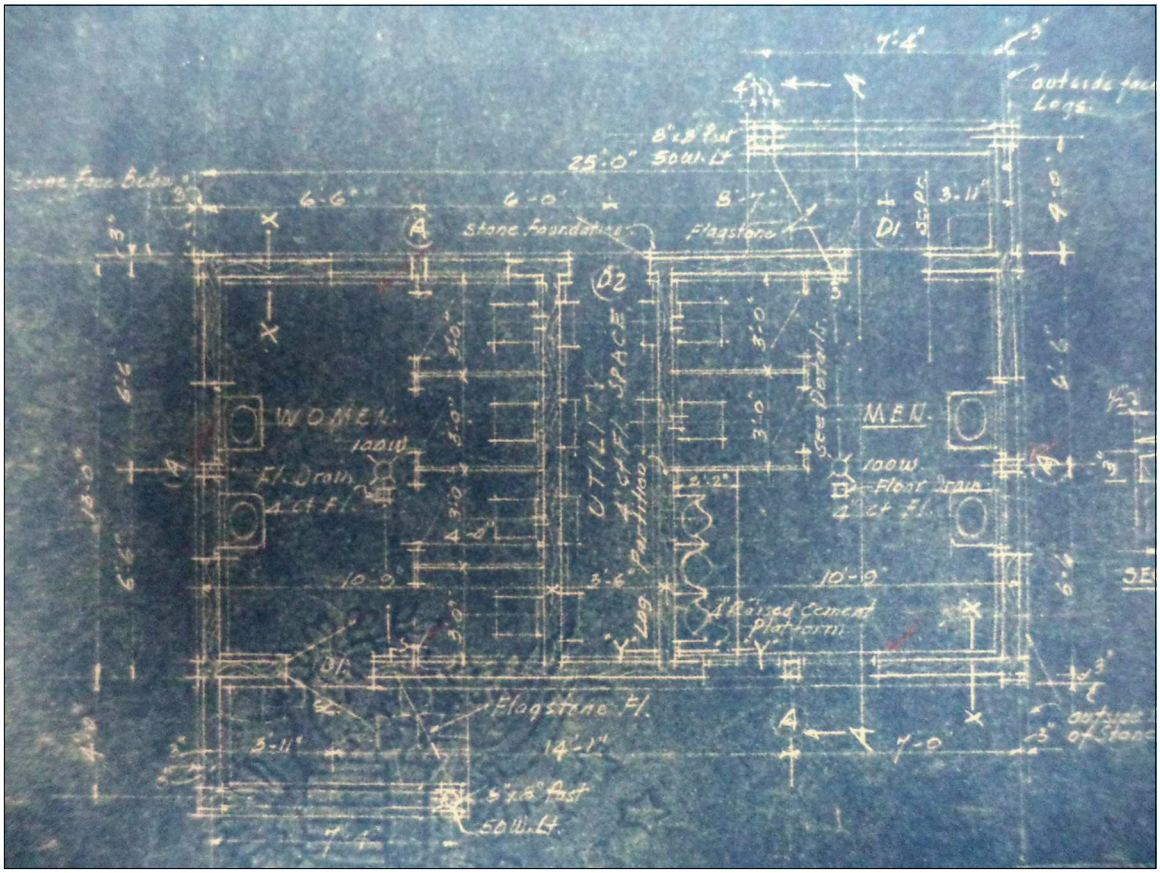

Figure 85. This blueprint for the "Standard Comfort Station" in Shenandoah National Park is not marked with racial designations. This is because this plan was used at picnic areas that were already racially designated for White use. In these spaces, the NPS segregated through the practice of racial exclusion. ("Standard Comfort Station," 1936, Drawing SHE-2002A, Folder 7, Drawer 5, Map Case 11, Series X, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.)

In contrast, at other sites, the NPS did develop comfort stations that segregated visitors through the practice of racial separation within a single facility. For example, in 1940—the same year the "Standard Stone Comfort Station" plan used at Lewis Mountain was developed—the "Standard Stone Comfort Station for White and Colored" SHE-2158A was also approved (see Figure 87).[23] This plan was used at Hughes River Gap in 1940. Indeed, park records indicate that the temporary comfort station that preceded this facility on the site was also racially separated, and the NPS had anticipated building a permanent racially separated facility at Hughes River as early as 1937. An early location plan suggested that "colored compartments" could be added to the Standard Comfort Station plan.[24] This model provided

23 Drawing SHE 2158A, "Shenandoah National Park Standard Stone Comfort Station for White and Colored," Approved in 1940, folder 7, Drawer 5, Map Case 11, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

24 Superintendent Lassiter to Mr. Demaray, 18 May 1939, Box 1650, Entry 7, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. Location Plan for a Comfort Station at Hughes River Gap, 1937, Folder 6, Drawer 1, Map Case 7,

Figure 86. In the 1940s, the comfort station constructed at Lewis Mountain was built from plans for the "Standard Stone Comfort Station." Blueprints for this facility were also not racially marked because it was understood that the recreational area was intended exclusively for African American use. (Located in building file dated to 1951, Box XI-8, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.)

four toilet fixtures for White women and four for White men accessed from the front façade of the building, and two fixtures for Black women and two for Black men accessed from the rear of the facility.[25] At locations where this plan was used, the NPS must have anticipated the presence of Black visitors. Likewise, racially separated temporary pit toilets were located at other roadside stops and overlooks, including Hogwallow Flats, Jeremy Run, Kites Deadening, Pinefield, Doyle River, and Wildcat Ridge. The plans for these facilities were developed as early as 1936 (see Figure 88).[26] With separate buildings for men and women, White travelers entered from one side of the structure and Black travelers entered from the other. Partitions that were five feet tall separated toilets within the White section, while a six-foot partition separated White and Black toilets and extended across the entire width of the structure to completely block off the two areas.[27] These facilities offered travelers quick pit stops at convenient locations along Skyline Drive. In locations where the NPS anticipated more prolonged

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Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

25 Hughes River Gap Comfort Station Building File, Folder 6, Drawer 1, Map Case 7, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

26 1939 Shenandoah National Park Master Plan, Box 10, Shelf 4, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

27 Drawing SHE-2167, Shenandoah National Park Temporary Toilets for Men and Women, drawn 1936, folder 6, Drawer 5, Map Case 11, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

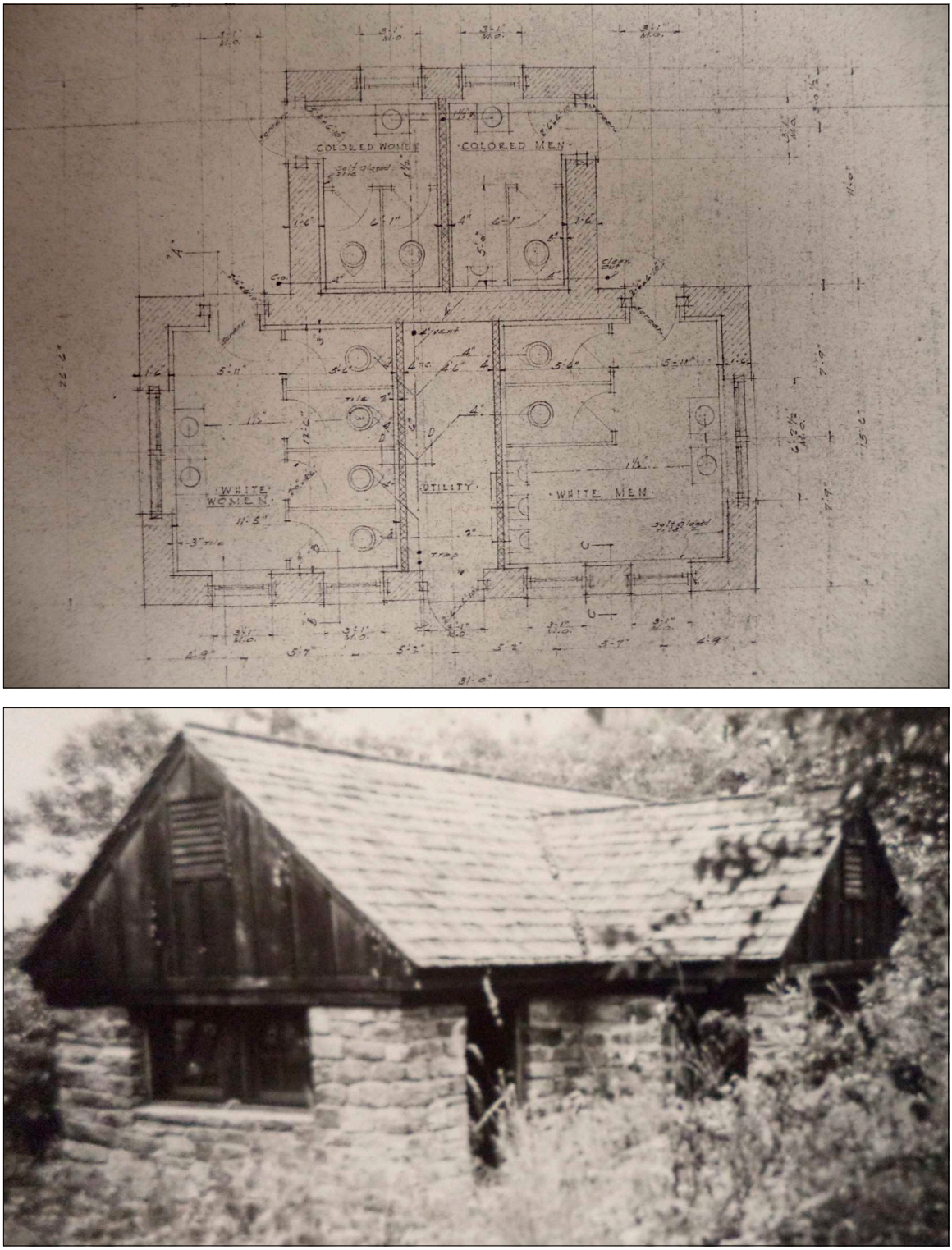

Figure 87. Shenandoah National Park's "Standard Stone Comfort Station for White & Colored" blueprint (top) featured four restrooms, separated by race and sex. A facility based off this plan (above) was constructed at Hughes River Gap. In this image, the separate entrances intended for "White" and "Colored" visitors are visible. ("Standard Stone Comfort Station for White and Colored," Drawing NP-SHE-2158A, Folder 6, Drawer 5, Map Case 11, Series X, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA. Photograph from Hughes River Gap located in building file, Box XI-8, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.)

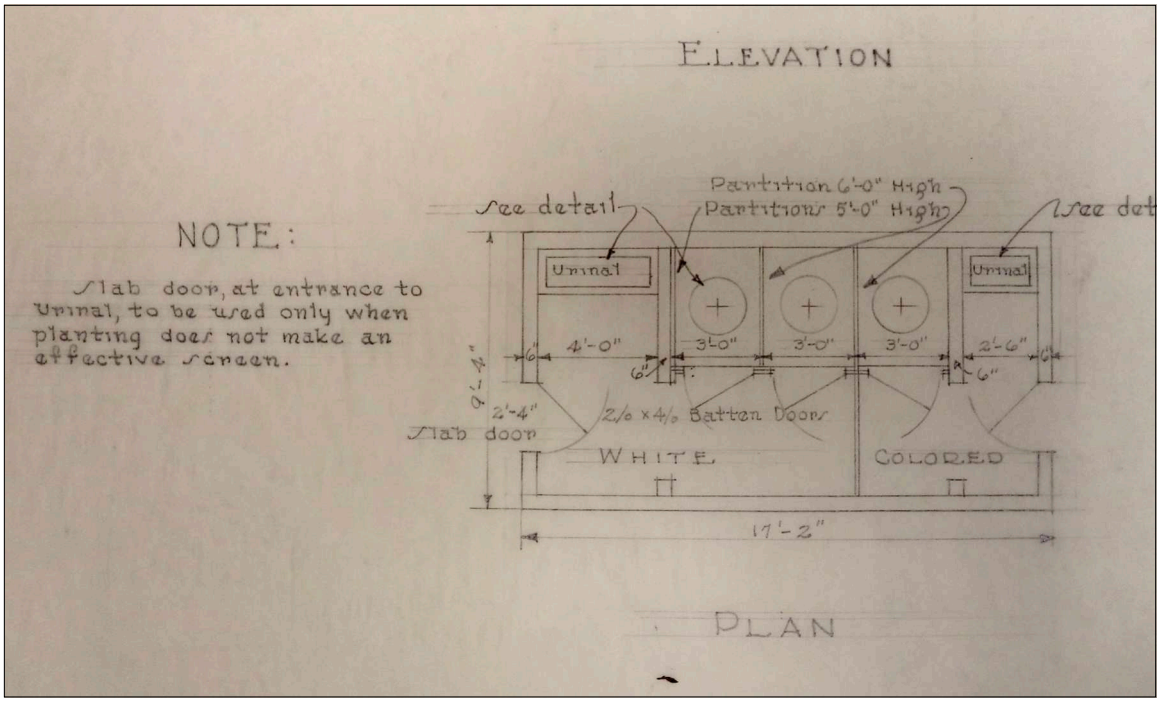

Figure 88. Shenandoah's standard plans for "Temporary Toilets for Men and Women" were also racially segregated. This detail of the plan for men, shows the use of a higher partition that extended across the width of the building to separate facilities for "White" and "Colored" visitors. The facilities for women featured three toilet stalls for White women, and one for African American women. (Temporary Toilets for Men and Women, 1936, Drawing NP-SHE-2167, Folder 6, Drawer 5, Map Case 11, Series X, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.)

stays—like picnic areas—park planners relied on the practice of racial exclusion rather than racial separation at a single site.

By February 1939, fewer than twenty percent of existing comfort stations in Shenandoah National Park met the needs of Black visitors—a proportion the park planned to maintain as additional facilities were constructed. Generally, these restrooms were available at concession buildings and some parking overlooks, in addition to the African American picnic and campground established at Lewis Mountain. Duplicative facilities were not constructed in spaces where African Americans were already excluded, like White only picnic grounds. The only existing laundry and shower building was reserved for White visitors.[28]

28 Accommodations for Visitors, Shenandoah National Park, 21 February 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

Park Concessions and Segregation

The costs associated with creating duplicative facilities for concessionaires were high. Their facilities involved much more capital investment than the picnic grounds or stand-alone comfort stations operated by the NPS. Initially, the Virginia Sky-Line Company resisted pressure to create concessions for African American visitors at Lewis Mountain in Shenandoah National Park because they did not believe they could be operated at a profit.[29] However, by the 1940 season, Black travelers could secure overnight lodging in cabins at Lewis Mountain. These facilities, and the associated dining room in the lodge, were designated for the exclusive use of African American visitors. Black visitors were not invited to use guest cabins or rooms at other locations.[30] Sit-down dining service was also formally segregated with specific spaces assigned for the use of Black diners and others reserved for White use.

Sit-down dining service was provided for African American travelers in small sections of the dining rooms at Panorama and Swift Run Gap Taverns. During the 1939 season, the dining space in both facilities were extended to allow for the provision of "lunch and dining service for negroes."[31] These changes are evident on the floor plan of the lodge at Panorama extant in 1947, for example. It featured a main dining room and coffee shop, but also a smaller dining space that could be accessed from a separate exterior entrance (see Figure 89).[32] In order accommodate Black travelers, an approved plan for a temporary comfort station that had been deployed at Skyland was implemented at Swift Run in 1937. It featured facilities for Black men and women behind the restroom for White men (see Figure 90).[33] Concessionaire T. McCall Frazier later recalled that the Virginia Sky-Line Company agreed to provide service at these particular concessions in exchange for the assurance that the dining rooms at Dickey Ridge, Elkwallow, Skyland, and Big Meadows "would be reserved for the exclusive use of

29 T. McCall Frazier to Director Arno B. Cammerer, 1 March 1940, Box 1650, Entry 7, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

30 In the 1939 visitor season before the completion of Lewis Mountain, Virginia Skyline Company Vice President T. McCall Frazier reported that the company had recorded nine requests for overnight accommodation from Black travelers. While he suggested that "five of these were taken care of at Skyland," he does not provide any further detail about where these travelers were housed. Moreover, as noted above, other visitors like Sadie Evans Gough reported that they were turned away from overnight accommodations within the park during this same year. See T. McCall Frazier to Director Arno B. Cammerer, 1 March 1940, Box 1650, Entry 7, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

31 1940 Shenandoah National Park Master Plan, Box 13, Shelf 4, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

32 Drawing SHE-5557, Building Survey at Thornton Gap, December 1947, Folder 3, Drawer 1, Map Case 13, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

33 Superintendent Lassiter to Mr. Demaray, 18 May 1939, Box 1650, Entry 7, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. Drawing SHE-2001, Shenandoah National Park temporary comfort station, Folder7, Drawer 5, Map Case 11; as constructed at Swift Run Comfort Station Building File, Folder 47, Box XI-8, and Skyland Comfort Station Building File, Folder 15, XI-12, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

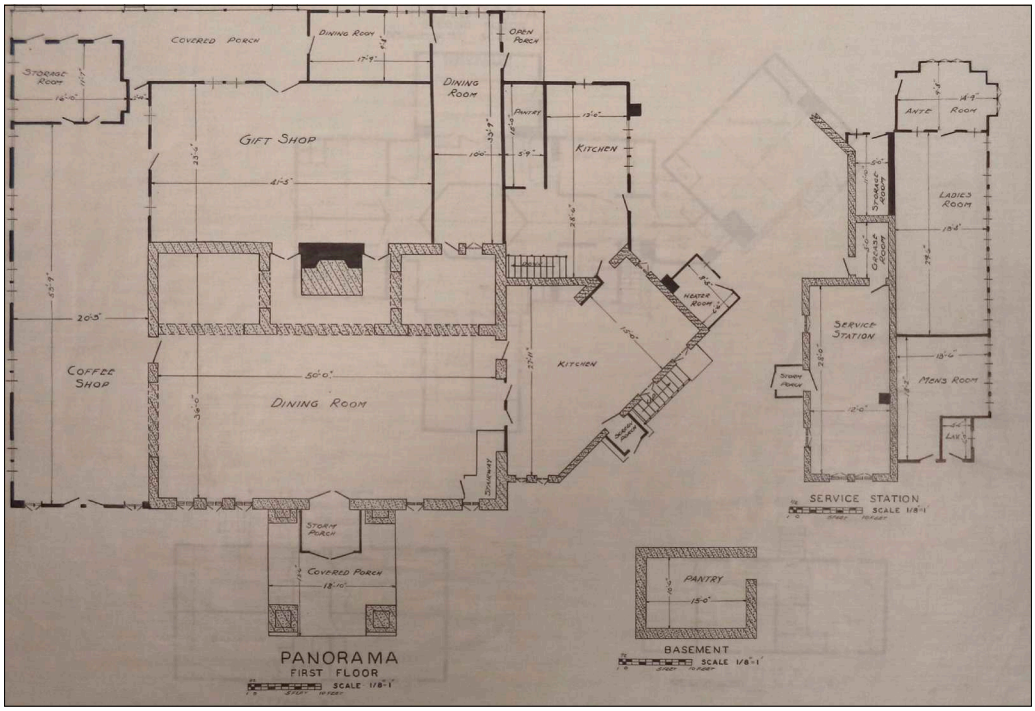

Figure 89. The first floor of Panorama Tavern as recorded in 1947. In addition to the coffee shop, the floor-plan features two dining rooms. (Thornton Gap Building Survey, Drawing NP-SHE-5557, Folder 3, Drawer 1, Map Case 13, Series X, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.)

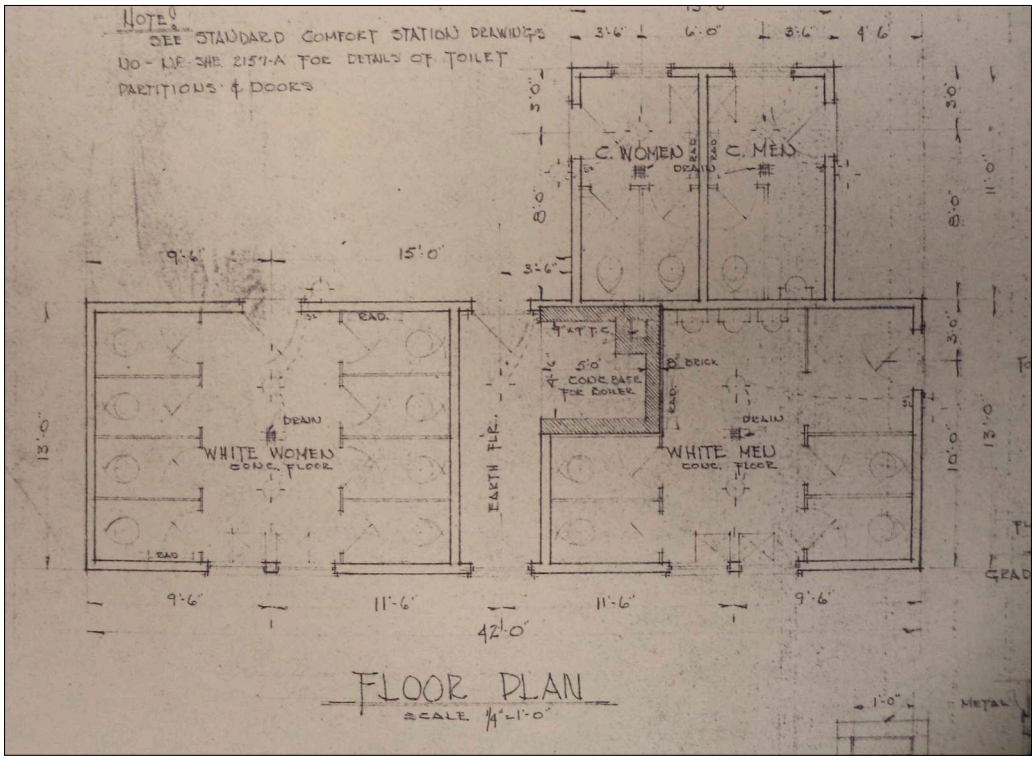

Figure 90. Swift Run Comfort Station, featuring segregated restroom facilities. The smaller lavatories intended for African American visitors are marked "C" for "Colored." ([Temporary] Comfort Station, Swift Run Gap, 1940, Drawing NP-SHE-2186, Folder 5, Drawer 1, Map Case 10, Series X, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.)

white people."[34] Before the facilities at Lewis Mountain, Panorama and Swift Run were made available, Black visitors seeking table service had been served alongside the park's "Negro help" in the employee dining room.[35]

Although the provision of table service was a new development in Shenandoah National Park in 1939, park records indicate that Black travelers already had access to service at lunch counters at Dickey Ridge, Elkwallow, Panorama, Big Meadows, and Swift Run Gap.[36] In the late 1930s, the NPS appeared to draw a distinction between formal sit-down dining and informal food service at lunch counters and sandwich shops, which was less rigidly segregated in areas that provided for joint use. In 1939, for example, NPS staff at Blue Ridge Parkway met with Department of Interior Adviser on Negro Affairs W. J. Trent and agreed that "gasoline, service, and eating facilities located close to the parkway road will in all cases provide for both White and Negro use." However, the following provisions were attached to joint use of these kinds of areas. No division of service would be made between Black and White visitors at gasoline stations, sandwich shops, lunch counters, or in the sale of souvenirs. However, separate dining rooms would segregate Black and White diners for more formal meals both inside concessions buildings, and outside on terraces. [37]

A similar pattern is evident at concessions facilities developed within Shenandoah National Park. At roadside stations that provided guests with access to gasoline service or more informal food service at coffee and lunch counters, the Virginia Sky-Line Co. provided lunch service and anticipated the presence of Black travelers by developing racially separated facilities. This is evident at Big Meadows, Dickey Ridge, and Elkwallow gasoline and wayside stations where the concessionaire constructed segregated restrooms designated for White and Black use and marked these facilities with signs.[38] This is particularly striking since as noted above, the NPS-constructed comfort stations located at the picnic grounds at these developed areas relied on the practice of racial exclusion, and similarly, the Virginia Sky-Line Company also intended to exclude Black travelers from formal dining rooms at these sites.

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34 Frazier to Edward D. Freeland, Shenandoah Superintendent, 18 February 1946; Freeland to NPS Director, 18 February 1946, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA. A letter from Superintendent Lassiter to NPS Director in March of 1939 that describes the proposed changes at Panorama and Swift Run affirms, "it is not proposed to establish any negro facilities for meals in the Dickey Ridge, and Big Meadows dining rooms." See Superintendent Lassiter to NPS Director, 28 March 1939, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

35 Accommodations for Visitors, Shenandoah National Park, 21 February 1939, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48; Demaray to Cammerer, 25 March 1939, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

36 Superintendent Lassiter to NPS Director, 28 March 1939, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

37 A. E. Demaray, NPS Acting Director, to Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes, 5 May 1939; Stanley W. Abbott, BLRI Acting Superintendent, Memo for Files, 28 June 1940, Box 2737. Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

38 Superintendent Lassiter to Mr. Demaray, 18 May 1939, Box 1650, Entry 7, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD. 1939 Shenandoah National Park Master Plan, Box 10, Shelf 4, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

This suggests that the concessionaire anticipated that Black travelers may have needed to stop at wayside stations to acquire gasoline, purchase coffee, or other items at lunch counters, and use restrooms. However, the NPS did not permit prolonged visits in picnic grounds that were clearly marked for White use, and the Virginia Sky-Line Company did not provide access to more leisurely sit-down dining in adjacent buildings.

White restrooms at filling stations were larger and located in more prominent and accessible locations, while the entrances for Black travelers were located to the side or the rear of most buildings. Preliminary studies developed in 1936 for the Elkwallow Filling and Comfort Station developed by the NPS Branch of Plans and Design in Richmond included facilities for White women and men, with smaller additional facilities designated "Col. M." and "Col. W." to the rear of the structure.[39] Although the footprint of this building changed in construction in the 1950s, four lavatories are still evident on floorplan. The two to the rear are afforded half the space of those to the front of the building. By 1970, this space appears to have been converted to storage.[40] The 1937 approved plans for the lodge at Dickey Ridge included restrooms for White men, White women, and Black women accessed from the side of the structure, with restrooms for Black men from the rear.[41] By the 1950s, the former "colored men's" restroom continued to be designated as a lavatory, while the two White restrooms were simply labeled as restrooms without reference to race. The space formally used as a "colored women's" restroom had been converted to storage.[42] Completed in 1938, plans for the Big Meadows Gasoline Station also included restrooms designated for White men and women, and African American men and women.[43] The 1942 master plan notes that the facilities provided three fixtures for "white men" and 2 for "negro men," and 2 fixtures for "white women" and 1 fixture for "negro women."[44] A 1957 floor plan labeled as an interim plan only continued to utilize two of these four spaces as restrooms. Later, the partitions that once segregated the restrooms may have been removed to allow for two more spacious facilities intended to be utilized without regard to race.[45] The changes in these restroom facilities, including their reduction in number, the elimination of partitions, or their conversion to other

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39 Drawing SHE-2003, Preliminary Study Elkwallow Filling & Comfort Station, Folder 4, Drawer 4, Map Case 5, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

40 Elkwallow Wayside Building File, Folder 23, Box XI-1, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

41 Dickey Hill Ridge Lodge, Approved 1937, Folder 7, Drawer 2, Map Case 5, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

42 Dickey Ridge Lodge building file, Folder 10, Box XI-1, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

43 Big Meadows Gas Station, Approved 1937, Folder 5, Drawer 3, Map Case 9, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

44 1942 Master Plan, Box 16, Shelf 4, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

45 Big Meadows Wayside Station Building File, Folder 18, Box XI-2, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

uses is indicative of the shift away from racial segregation in the park and the elimination of duplicative facilities that required twice as much maintenance and upkeep.

At lodges and dining rooms intended exclusively for the use of White travelers, there are no visible racial labels on archived blueprints, although there are locker rooms, lavatories, and dining areas designated for the use of employees, which may indicate the provision of facilities for African American employees working at these sites. The practice of providing service to Black travelers in existing employee dining rooms before the development of formally designated areas suggests that these spaces carried racial associations. The Virginia Sky-Line Company employed African American managers and staff at Lewis Mountain, but they also hired Black employees in other concessions. At Skyland, the company developed plans to construct segregated dormitories for employees in 1937 (see Figure 91). The Company proposed to immediately construct four of these structures—designated for Black women, Black men, White women, and White men respectively—with plans to ultimately build as many as six more. The dormitories for White employees were to be organized around a central courtyard. This spatial arrangement was mirrored in the area designated for "colored employees" with the two areas separated by an incline. The size and scale of these structures and the space afforded for White and Black employees was equal, although the White courtyard was located in closer proximity to the parking area. Each dormitory featured eight bedrooms, a laundry, and restrooms with showers. At least three of these dormitories were constructed in 1937, with an additional three proposed on the 1943 master plan.[46]

Gradual Integration of Park Facilities

In 1939, in response to complaints from African American visitors and civil rights organizations, the Secretary of Interior's office organized an internal review of the practice of segregation in national parks in Virginia and elsewhere. Although Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes would ultimately decide to "generally abide" by the local laws and customs of the state, this internal inquiry planted the seeds of future change as advocates for African American civil rights within the Department strove to overturn established policy. Significantly, Secretary of Interior Ickes inaugurated an experiment with integration in Shenandoah National Park at Pinnacles Picnic Ground to test visitor response to a change in NPS policy.[47] The selection of Shenandoah National Park as an optimal testing ground was not unusual. The NPS had developed a wider range of visitor facilities in Shenandoah than almost anywhere else in the southern states. For NPS Director Cammerer, the "pioneer" status of the park meant that

46 Drawing SHE 2063-4 Skyland Employee Quarters, Folder 1, Drawer 1, Map Case 8; 1939 Master Plan, Box 12, Shelf 4; 1943 Master Plan, Box 7, Shelf 4, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

47 Demaray to Cammerer, 25 March 1939, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

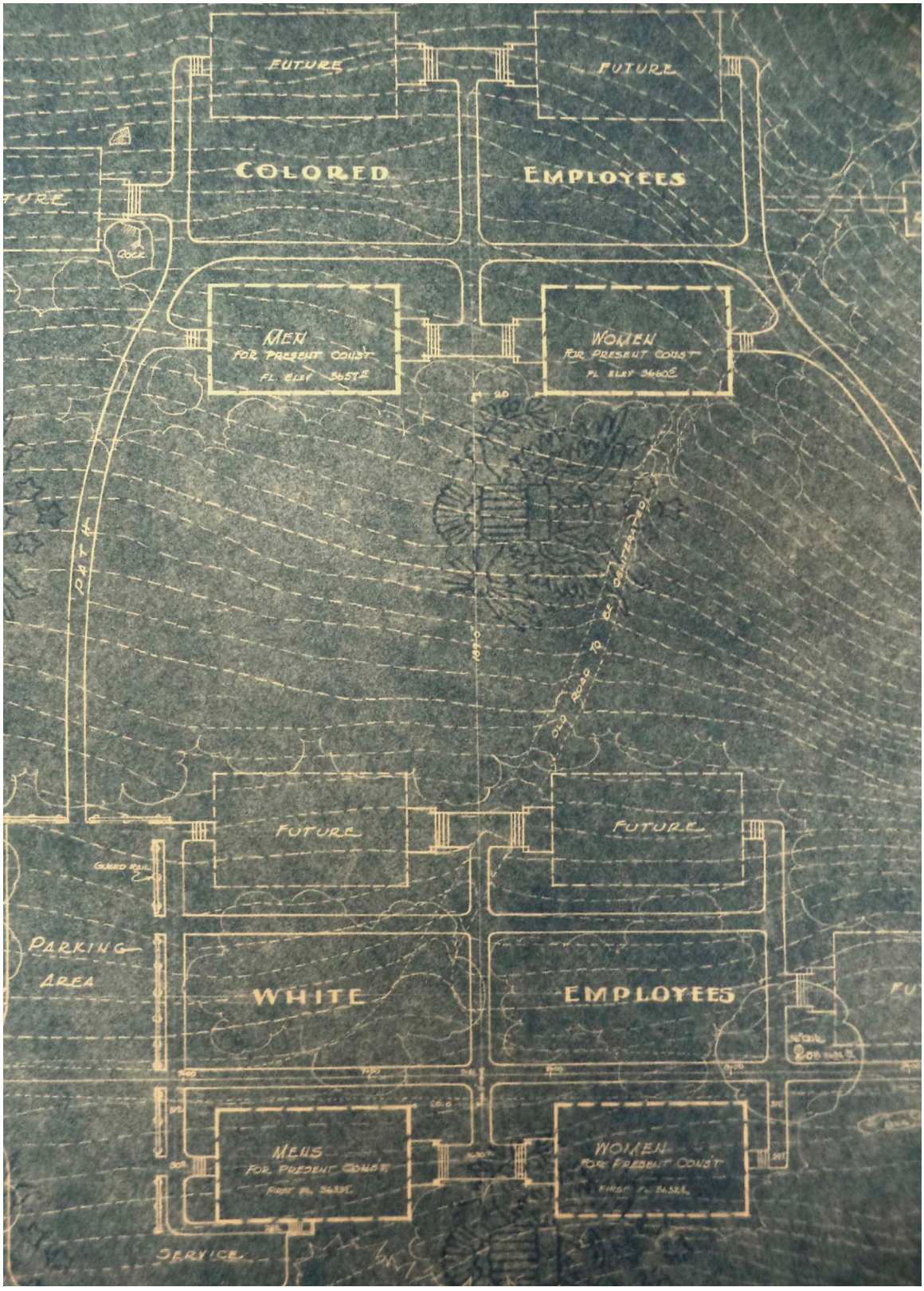

Figure 91. A blueprint for planned dormitories at Skyland. (Skyland Employees Quarters, 1937, Folder 1, Drawer 1, Map Case 8, Series X, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.)

generally, "both the character and the extent of the park operator's proposed installations" merited careful study because they might be replicated elsewhere.[48]

Shenandoah National Park staff did not support the inauguration of this experiment in integration. Superintendent Lassiter and local park rangers continued to guide and direct White and Black visitors to the segregated facilities available in the park during the 1940 season. However, it came to the attention of the national office that they were not similarly informing visitors about the availability of Pinnacles Picnic Ground for integrated use.[49] Superintendent Lassiter was reprimanded for this practice and was also encouraged to explore ways to make the extant segregation signs in the park less visible. Lassiter's frustration with the national office's instructions to maintain a policy of segregation in most parts of the park without openly advertising it, and the confusion induced by opening Pinnacles, erupted late in the summer of 1940. "I believe what we need is more and bigger 'For White Only' signs," Lassiter wrote. The superintendent reported that rangers were "continually" confronting African American visitors in White picnic grounds and attached a report from his chief ranger about an incident at Big Meadows Picnic Grounds just days earlier.[50] Park rangers had directed an African American group from Washington, DC, to leave the area and go to the "colored picnic grounds." Since the group had almost completed their meal, they were permitted to finish their picnic but rangers refused to allow the women in the party to use the comfort stations in the area before departing and the group "complained bitterly." The ranger reported, "They seemed to be trying to make an issue of this matter by stating that this was a public area and that they had as much right to use this area as anyone else." After members of the group suggested they would take their complaint directly to Secretary Ickes, the ranger noted that he was enforcing established policy. "I explained the policy of the Park Service as to segregation because of the feeling toward negroes in the South," he reported. "The Southern peolpe [sic] want their Picnic Grounds separate from the colored people and it seems to me that the colored people would be satisfied within their own separate Picnic Grounds." The ranger asked for the names of the members of the group, but they refused to provide them. He collected their license plate numbers and complained that the group was "very discourtious [sic] about the whole matter."[51] Lassiter suggested that this interaction was representative of a larger pattern of visitor confusion.[52] It was also evidence of the constraints that continued to be placed on Black visitors.

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48 Cammerer to Assistant Secretary Chapman, 1 March 1038, Box 20, Entry 768, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

49 Trent to Burlew, 31 July 1940, with copy of map, Box 3791, Entry 749B, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

50 Lassiter to NPS Director, 1 August 1940, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

51 Ranger Downing L. Smith, Big Meadows Campground, to Mr. Hopper, Central District Ranger, 28 July 1940; R.G. Hopper, Central District Ranger, to Chief Ranger Stephens, 28 July 1940, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

52 Lassiter to NPS Director, 1 August 1940, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

The superintendent called for the abandonment of the integration experiment at Pinnacles Picnic Ground and a return to a policy of "definite segregation." He wrote, "So far the mingling of the races has only brought criticism from the white, and the separation has brought criticism from the black." In promoting a policy of segregation, the superintendent revealed that he was primarily concerned with complaints from White rather than Black tourists. Lassiter acknowledged that a return to racial separation would not "meet with the approval of that group of Negroes and their leaders who are not content with a gradual and steady improvement in the interracial relations but must have their millennium at once." However, he asserted, "It seems to me that we are making a mountain out of a mole hill in becoming excited every time a high-toned Negro files a complaint about segregation of races. Non-segregation may be all right for some people in some sections, but I think non-segregation in the south will work to the disadvantage of the southern Negro, although it might be to the advantage of the rare Negro tourist." [53]

Despite Lassiter's recommendations, the Washington office continued to explore the possibility of expanding the experiment with integration at Pinnacles. Acting Director A. E. Demaray assigned Chief Engineer Oliver G. Taylor to work cooperatively with Superintendent Lassiter to investigate current conditions in the park and make recommendations related to the construction of "sanitary and other facilities that may be necessary" before opening all picnic areas and campgrounds for joint use. These instructions suggest that even as the NPS explored the possibility of integrating additional parts of the park, Washington officials believed that a precondition for doing so might be the construction of additional segregated comfort stations. Evidently officials felt that this racial boundary would need to be maintained if the experiment expanded more widely.[54] Shortly after receiving notice of Taylor's visit, Superintendent Lassiter directed his park rangers to send "any information or complaints or comments concerning colored people" to his office "*at once*." Lassiter evidently sought information that would undercut any effort to integrate additional park facilities, but Park Ranger Maynard C. Isett reported, "There have been no comments or complaints about negroes."[55]

Nevertheless, Chief Engineer Oliver G. Taylor's report on "Developments for Public Use in Shenandoah National Park with Particular Reference to Racial Use" generally supported Superintendent Lassiter's efforts to halt the integration experiment in the park. Earlier in his career, Lassiter had worked with Taylor as a fellow engineer. While working for the Eastern Division of the Branch of Plans and Design in the early 1930s, Taylor advocated for the development of segregated facilities at the Colonial and George Washington Birthplace National Monuments. In 1931, Taylor acknowledged that "colored people must be given more

53 Lassiter to NPS Director, 1 August 1940.

54 Demaray to Taylor, 12 December 1940; Oliver G. Taylor, Chief of Engineering, "A Report on Developments for Public Use in Shenandoah National Park with Particular Reference to Racial Use," 23 January 1941, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

55 Lassiter to All Rangers, 8 January 1941; Isett to Lassiter, 10 January 1941, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

consideration by the Federal Government than is given them by the state," but insisted, "We just must in some manner continue to maintain the color line and keep the colored people in their places."[56] Given this investment in the maintenance of Jim Crow racial hierarchies and the segregation of visitor facilities, Taylor was hardly a disinterested observer.

In his report, Taylor relayed many of Lassiter's recommendations and incorporated them into his own analysis. Taylor observed, "The Superintendent advises against much more common use of areas at this time. He thinks that in time there could be more common use without difficulty, but that it must come gradually. The Superintendent thinks that there must be segregation in dining rooms and for lodging." Taylor concurred, recommending the maintenance of segregation in all dining and lodging facilities operated by the concessionaire, as well as campgrounds. Rangers had not observed any African American campers using campgrounds in the park, and Taylor believed that the existence of a White campground at Big Meadows and a Black campground at Lewis Mountain was unlikely to provoke complaint. He also maintained that the park should continue to provide "white people who object to close association with negroes" and "the negroes of the South who prefer their own areas" with picnic areas set aside for the use of specific racial groups. He called for the construction of two additional picnic grounds for the convenience of African American travelers in the top and bottom thirds of the park. In relation his charge to investigate the potential for expanding the integration experiment, Taylor conceded that the park might consider opening at least one additional picnic area for joint use, but he did not believe that any of the current picnic grounds designated for White use would suit.[57]

Taylor collected updated statistics on the availability of various facilities for White and Black visitors in the park, and noted that African American visitation to the park during the 1939 and 1940 seasons continued to hover around one percent. At Lewis Mountain, the dining room and lunch counter operated at five percent of their potential maximum use; the picnic ground at ten percent capacity. Taylor reported that the local African American community was "delighted to have their own area." It was the "negroes from Washington and Baltimore and those on tour…who at times object to segregation and write to Washington." This oft-repeated assertion was not substantiated with evidence. In comparison to the infrequent use of facilities at Lewis Mountain, Taylor suggested picnic grounds designated for White use were at or near capacity on holidays and weekends. The Chief Engineer observed that "many times negroes use picnic grounds that are intended only for white," and suggested that this was due to inadequate directional signs and park literature. Like Superintendent

56 Oliver G. Taylor, Engineer in Charge, to Associate Director Demaray, 10 August 1931, Colonial National Historical Park Administrative Files, Box A03, 620-15, COLO, Yorktown, VA.

57 Oliver G. Taylor, Chief of Engineering, "A Report on Developments for Public Use in Shenandoah National Park with Particular Reference to Racial Use," 23 January 1941, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

Lassiter, Taylor contended that unintended mixed use was largely because "the negro has no way of knowing which accommodations are for his use."[58]

Notably, however, despite local reports about discomfort with the joint use of Pinnacles Picnic Ground, the Chief Engineer reported that the area was "filled every Sunday and holiday, with an overflow at times to 150% of capacity." Taylor also acknowledged that "no disorders have been reported" and "there have been no written reports of dissatisfaction on the common use of Pinnacles Picnic Ground." Nevertheless, White visitors who objected to the joint use of the area had been observed by rangers who reported that "usually they get mad, freeze up and leave without talking to anyone." Superintendent Lassiter and his staff also contended that White visitors tended to "separate themselves" by placing distance between themselves and Black picnickers. While there had been no racial conflict or violence, the Superintendent and the Chief Ranger believed that "under certain combinations of personalities and circumstances" the situation was potentially explosive.[59]

However, the Secretary of Interior's office viewed this collection of observations differently. There were relatively few African American visitors to Shenandoah National Park. Both White and Black visitors were using Pinnacles Picnic Ground with no evidence of direct conflict. White visitors had not filed formal complaints with the park, even when African American tourists used spaces formally designated and marked for White use only. In conference with A. E. Demaray and new NPS Director Newton B. Drury, Interior decided to continue the operation of segregated campgrounds, dining facilities, and overnight accommodations, but to desegregate all the existing picnic grounds within the park in 1941. Drury informed Superintendent Lassiter, "This decision is made on the understanding that it is experimental for the coming year, that negro use will be carefully observed, and that no publicity or statements will be given out locally regarding this decision."[60] NPS Counsel George Moskey was also informed that the use of integrated picnic grounds in Shenandoah National Park was not necessarily a change in policy "as it is only an experiment."[61]

In 1942, the experiment with integration at Shenandoah was expanded to include all picnic grounds in the southern states,[62] and by 1945, Secretary of Interior Ickes approved a nondiscrimination clause that applied to all park concessions and visitor facilities.[63] This change was not warmly received by the Virginia Sky-Line Company in Shenandoah Na-

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58 Oliver G. Taylor, Chief of Engineering, "A Report on Developments for Public Use in Shenandoah National Park."

59 Oliver G. Taylor, Chief of Engineering, "A Report on Developments for Public Use in Shenandoah National Park."

60 Drury to Lassiter, 25 February 1941, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

61 C. C. Mullady to George Moskey, 7 April 1941, Box 1650, Entry 10.2, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

62 Demaray to Frank D. Reeves, NAACP Administrative Assistant, 17 July 1942, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

63 "Discrimination in furnishing public accommodations," amendment to Title 36, Chapter I, Part 2, Code of Federal Regulations, issued 4 December 1945, Box 3795, Entry 810, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

tional Park. Although the concessionaire's contract did not include a line prohibiting racial discrimination specifically, the company had agreed to abide by the rules and regulations of the NPS. Nevertheless, Vice President T. McCall Frazier objected to the application of the amendment on the grounds of a verbal agreement reached with the director's office in March of 1939. Frazier recalled that his company had only agreed to construct the facilities at Lewis Mountain in exchange for the assurance that segregation would be maintained throughout the park. Although the Sky-Line Company felt that the NPS "breached" the terms of this agreement when they removed the signs from the picnic grounds, they had not made an issue of it. Nevertheless, he noted, Lewis Mountain had always "carried the designation, 'for the exclusive use of a negroes.'" Frazier proffered this observation as "evidence of the Park Service's intentions" to abide by the spirit of their understanding in relation to the operation of concessions for lodging and accommodation.[64] Indeed, Superintendent Freeland reported to the director's office that it had not even occurred to Frazier that the amendment would be applied in Shenandoah because of the strength of this understanding and he was "much disturbed" when the superintendent suggested that it would. "Mr. Frazier said he could not possibly see how the negro could be served along with the white as is the intent of the regulation," Freeland reported. "Virginia is a Southern state." When Frazier demanded to know Freeland's opinion, the superintendent told him "it was a mutual problem" but indicated that both men would have to work together "to see that the regulations were obeyed."[65]

Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes insisted that the concessionaire comply with the new regulation. However, he resigned shortly after this exchange in February 1946 and his successor Julius Krug adopted a more "flexible" approach to enforcing the nondiscrimination policy. In response to Virginia Sky-Line Company's threat to drop their contract, the NPS came to another "verbal agreement" with the concessionaire through Senator Harry Byrd to apply the regulation gradually.[66] Superintendent Freeland later recalled, "What we attempted to do was to ease into it gradually. To get our own people in the proper frame of mind so that they would go along with the new policy."[67] Facilities in the park continued to operate on a segregated basis through the 1946 season. Nevertheless, by 1947, the Department of Interior's solicitor's office had drafted standard language for concessionaire contracts that prohibited discrimination in the provision of public accommodations within the parks, as well

64 T. McCall Frazier, vice president and General Manager Virginia Sky-Line Company, Inc., to Edward D. Freeland, Superintendent Shenandoah National Park, 18 February 1946; Edward D. Freeland, Shenandoah Superintendent, to NPS Director, 19 February 1945, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

65 Freeland to NPS Director, 19 February 1946, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

66 Darwin Lambert, *The Undying Past: Shenandoah National Park* (Boulder, CO: Roberts Rinehart, Inc., 1989), 266. See also Reed L. Engle, "Shenandoah: Laboratory for Change," *CRM*, No. 1 (1998), 35.

67 Edward Dixon Freeland, Oral History Interview with Darwin Lambert, May 14, 1978, Shenandoah National Park Archives, Luray, VA. See also Lambert, *The Undying Past*, 266.

as discrimination in hiring and employment practices.[68] This language was incorporated into existing NPS contracts as they were renewed.[69]

Within a short period, Shenandoah National Park administrators began to direct African American visitors to a wider range of accommodations. In 1947, a group of three hundred Howard University students visited Shenandoah National Park on chartered Greyhound buses. Familiar with the facilities at Lewis Mountain, they inquired about their availability in advance of their visit. After receiving an escorted tour of the scenic overlooks along Skyline Drive, they picnicked at Lewis Mountain for three hours before returning to Washington, DC. The Washington office was concerned that any effort to segregate this large group would attract public attention. However, because the group inquired about the availability of Lewis Mountain, no effort was made to direct them elsewhere.[70] By way of contrast, just three years later in 1950, when another group of three hundred Howard students and their guests requested use of park facilities for their annual picnic, park officials encouraged them to use not only the facilities at Lewis Mountain where concessions and a picnic area were available, but also South River picnic grounds because its open space afforded an opportunity for the group to play softball and other games.[71] In responses to inquiries about the availability of facilities for Black travelers more generally, by 1950 Superintendent Freeland openly affirmed that all areas were open to all visitors. "The National Parks are public property and are set aside for the enjoyment and equal opportunity of all," he wrote.[72]

Ensuring that the park concessionaire, the Virginia Sky-Line Company, complied with the NPS's nondiscrimination regulations was a more complicated endeavor. In the early 1950s, the national office received recurrent complaints from Black visitors that suggested their rights to use facilities in the park on the same basis as White visitors were being undermined through subterfuge.[73] Under the direction of Secretary of Interior Oscar Chapman, the NPS actively investigated these complaints in an effort to ensure that park concessionaires complied with the spirit as well as the letter of the department's nondiscrimination regulations.

For example, in July 1950, the NPS Washington office received a telephone call from Virgil E. Heathcock, a Washington, DC, taxi driver who alleged that he and a companion had

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68 See Price to NPS Director Drury, 14 November 1947, with proposed language, Box 5, Entry 61, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

69 For example, see Contract with Government Services, Inc., National Capital Parks, executed 29 August 1949, Box 72, Entry 810, RG 48, NARA, College Park, MD.

70 Demaray to Shenandoah Superintendent, 19 May 1947; Chief Ranger Robert F. Gibbs to Shenandoah Superintendent, 26 May 1947, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

71 Nathaniel M. Adams, Jr., Corresponding Secretary for the Howard University Engineering and Architecture Student Council, 1 March 1950; Shenandoah Superintendent to Adams, 17 March 1950, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

72 Freeland to R. L. Sanford, 28 June 1950, Shenandoah Resource Management Records, Luray, VA.

73 For more information about this, please see chapter five, Extension and Enforcement.

been denied service at the Panorama Dining Room. Heathcock and another Metropolitan Taxi Cab driver had transported ten Catholic sisters attending a summer program at Catholic University to the park.[74] The women were seated at a table in the main dining room, but the manager and hostess, Mrs. Fears, invited the drivers who followed to sit in the "adjoining dining room." It is likely that this space, also referred to as "the private dining room," was the dining alcove that had formerly been designated for African American use when the park was officially segregated. Shenandoah National Park Superintendent Freeland maintained that it was "customary" to offer the small adjoining dining room or "corner" portion of the main dining room to large groups, regardless of their racial composition. However, even his own account of the incident indicated that the large group of Catholic sisters had not been invited to sit in either of these spaces until it became clear that they wanted to be seated with the two African American drivers.[75] In private correspondence between the NPS Director and the Secretary of Interior, Director Drury acknowledged that "something less than completely satisfactory service" had been provided to the group, but suggested that the practical limitations of the oddly-configured dining room at Panorama rather than a "deliberate attempt" to discriminate had led to the unfortunate incident.[76] Of course, the odd configuration of the space was a product of it segregated past. In his investigation of conditions in the park, Park Planner Arthur F. Perkins acknowledged, "It is quite likely that colored diners may be led to tables in the archways or side room unless they specifically request some other table."[77]

Generally, Perkins broader investigation revealed that aside from Panorama, African American visitors did not often request dining room service at the park's other concessions, but instead patronized stand-up lunch counters at most facilities even when they came in large groups on chartered bus tours. Managers at concessions with overnight accommodations maintained that African American visitors had not requested lodging at facilities formerly designated for White use, with the exception of one "out-of-state colored visitor" who requested a room after the lodge at Skyland was full for the evening. Perkins noted that African American travelers often specifically requested lodging at Lewis Mountain, either because it had initially been used "almost exclusively by Negroes," because it was managed by African American staff, or because of its established reputation.[78] The *Negro Travelers' Green Book* provided information to Black motorists about restaurants, hotels, private tourist homes, gas stations, and beauty and barber shops which would provide them with service as they

74 Sister Alphonse Mary to NPS Director, 17 July 1950; Newton Drury, NPS Director to Secretary of Interior, 27 July 1950, Box 21, Entry 61, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

75 Edward Freeland, Shenandoah Superintendent, to Region I Director, 21 July 1950, Box 21, Entry 61, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD

76 Newton Drury, NPS Director, to Secretary of Interior Oscar Chapman, 7 August 1950, Box 21, Entry 61, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

77 Arthur F. Perkins, Park Planner, to Region I Director, 28 July 1950, Box 21, Entry 61, RG 79, NARA, College Park, MD.

78 Arthur F. Perkins, Park Planner, to Region I Director, 28 July 1950.

traveled through unfamiliar areas. As late as 1964, Lewis Mountain continued to be the *only* NPS facility listed in the *Negro Traveler's Green Book* in the entire state of Virginia. By way of contrast, *Virginia Scenic Historyland*, the travel guide produced by the Virginia Travel Council, listed every other developed area with overnight accommodations in the park *except* Lewis Mountain in 1961.[79] These travel guides made no note of any change to NPS regulations. Even so, Perkins reported that one-third of diners at Lewis Mountain were White, and that the cabins, picnic area, and campground also received "mixed use."[80] This report suggested that African American visitors to the park in 1950 largely used the facilities that had been made available to them even when the park was formally segregated. The most significant change after the adoption of the desegregation policy was the appearance of significant numbers of White visitors at Lewis Mountain.

In the 1930s, Black visitors who wrote to complain of conditions in the southern national parks received letters of reply that attempted to justify the practice of segregation. By the 1950s, reports of discrimination prompted detailed investigations that sought to determine whether the nondiscrimination policy in the parks was being adhered to. Nevertheless, during this era the national parks in Virginia had become "jurisdictional islands" in a sea of segregation, and a hostile state climate may have perpetuated established patterns of visitation. The recurrent complaints that continued to trickle into the national office prompted the NPS to require concessionaires to display a public notice that discrimination was prohibited in their facilities. Issued in June 1962, this notice was a public affirmation of the NPS's nondiscrimination policy.[81]

Evaluation of Extant Resources

A substantial number of visitor facilities and landscapes developed in the 1930s and 1940s when the park was racially segregated are extant. Segregation is directly addressed in the 2003 National Register Boundary Increase Nomination that included Lewis Mountain, where extant landscapes like the picnic grounds and campground, and surviving structures including the lodge, cabins, and picnic area comfort station were recognized as historically significant not only because of their architectural features but because of their cultural and social significance in relation to African American recreation. Likewise, the use of the

79 *Virginia Scenic Historyland Guidebook* (1961), 14–15, A. Willis Robertson Papers, College of William and Mary Special Collections, Williamsburg, VA.

80 Arthur F. Perkins, Park Planner, to Region I Director, 28 July 1950.

81 "Negroes Plan Baths on 'Bath House Row,'" NAACP Press Release, 28 March 1963, Box 108, Part IX, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

dormitories at Skyland to provide housing for African American employees in the park is also noted.[82]

However, other facilities in the park that were constructed for the use of White visitors and relied on racial exclusion in the same period should also be identified and associated with the history of segregation, as well as wayside facilities that were designed to accommodate both White and Black travelers within the same building through the strategy of racial separation. Extant landscapes and structures that are also connected to the history of segregation in Shenandoah National Park and that are listed as contributing resources include Big Meadows Wayside (the wing that houses the restrooms is identified as retaining its integrity); Big Meadows Campground and the 1937 comfort stations; Big Meadows picnic area and comfort station; Big Meadows Lodge and cabins; Dickey Ridge Picnic Grounds and comfort station; Dickey Ridge Lodge; Elkwallow Wayside, gift shop, and cafeteria; Elkwallow Picnic Grounds and comfort station; Pinnacles Picnic Grounds, picnic pavilion and comfort station; and the South River Picnic Grounds and comfort station. The 1997 National Register Nomination for Skyline Drive highlights the architecture of Pinnacles Picnic Pavilion in its overview of the historic district's physical appearance as a good example of the rustic style deployed throughout the park.[83] While this might be a distinguishing feature of the pavilion, its strongest significance is its location as the first picnic ground to be integrated by the NPS in the southeastern United States.

Segregation touched virtually every aspect of the park's physical landscape in the 1930s, and it is important to recognize that it shaped the way visitors moved through the space. The experience of White visitors should not be generalized to address the experience of the totality of the traveling public when discussing this historic era. The wayside stations, parking overlooks, and developed areas along Skyline Drive are often discussed within the context of providing regular opportunities for visiting motorists to stop and enjoy the park at convenient intervals. But it should be recognized that many of these locations were not open to Black tourists, impeding their full enjoyment of the park.

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82 Skyline Drive Historic District Boundary Increase, 2003 National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/069-0234_Skyline_Drive_Historic_District_2003_Final_Nomination_2nd_Boundary_Increase.pdf.

83 Skyline Drive Historic District, 1997 National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/069-0234_SkylineDriveHD_1992_Nomination_NRHP_Final.pdf.

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